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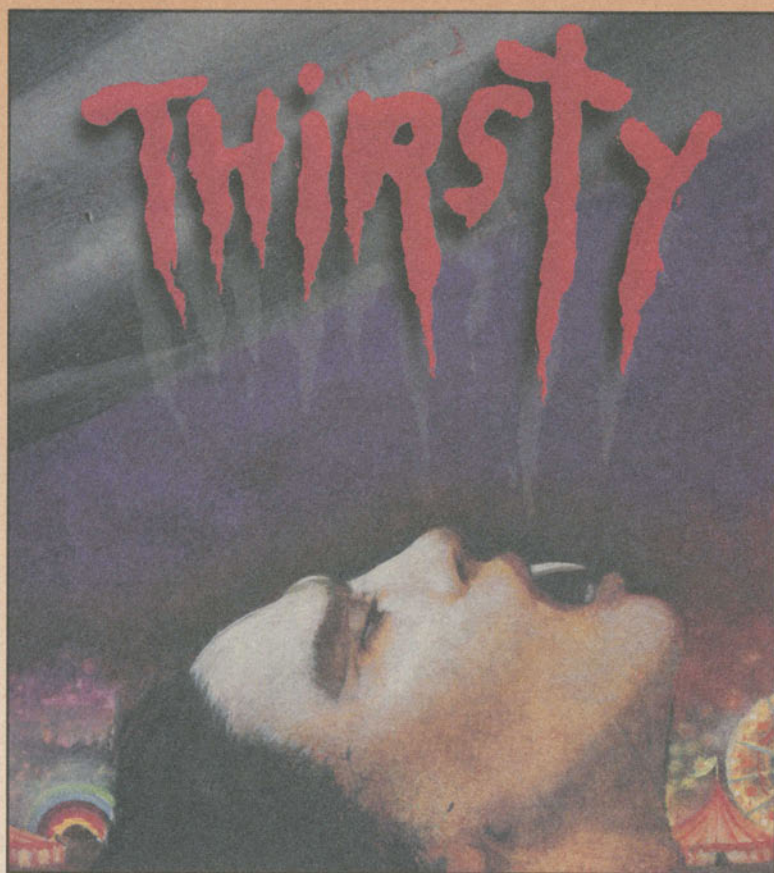
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THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

April 1997
Vol. 50 No. 8

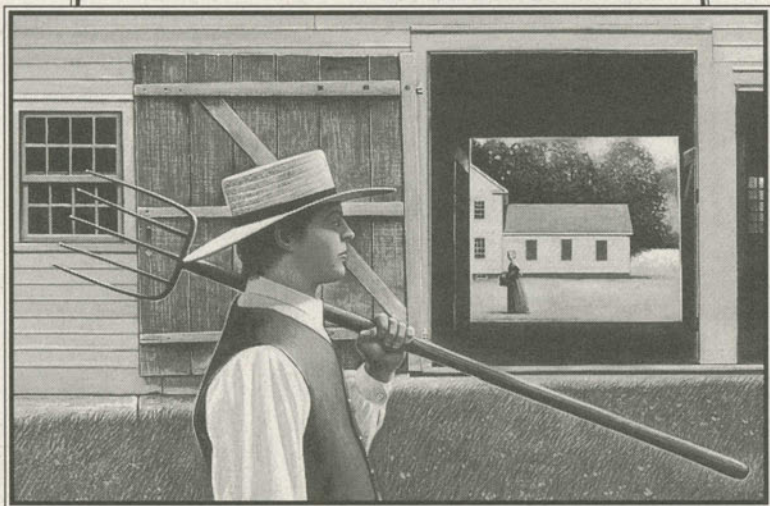


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T H E B U L L E T I N

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED WITH REVIEWS

* Asterisks denote books of special distinction.

R Recommended.

Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.

M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.

NR Not recommended.

SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.

SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books (ISSN 0008-9036) is published monthly except August by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the University of Illinois Press, 1325 S. Oak, Champaign, IL 61820-6903.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

1 year, institutions, \$40.00; individuals, \$35.00. In countries other than the United States, add \$7.00 per subscription for postage. Japanese subscription agent: Kinokuniya Company Ltd. Single copy rate: \$4.50. Reprinted volumes 1-35 (1947-1981) available from Kraus Reprint Co., Route 100, Millwood, NY 10546. Volumes available in microfilm from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Complete volumes available in microfiche from Johnson Associates, P.O. Box 1017, Greenwich, CT 06830. Subscription checks should be made payable to the University of Illinois Press. All notices of change of address should provide both the old and new address. Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, University of Illinois Press, 1325 S. Oak, Champaign, IL 61820-6903.

Subscription Correspondence. Address all inquiries about subscriptions and advertising to University of Illinois Press, 1325 S. Oak, Champaign, IL 61820-6903.

Editorial Correspondence. Review copies and all correspondence about reviews should be sent to Janice Del Negro, *The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, 51 E. Armory Ave., Champaign, IL 61820-6601. E-mail: bccb@alexia.lis.uiuc.edu

Visit our homepage at <http://edfu.lis.uiuc.edu/puboff/bccb>

Periodicals postage paid at Champaign, Illinois

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Drawings by Debra Bolga. This publication is printed on acid-free paper.

Cover illustration by Greg Spalenka, from *Thirsty* ©1997 and used by permission of Candlewick Press.

THE BIG PICTURE

Thirsty

by M. T. Anderson

No, it's *not* true that the *Bulletin* never met a vampire book it didn't like; it's just that the last few years have given us such bloody good ones, if you'll pardon the expression, as Vivian Vande Velde's *Companions of the Night* (BCCB 7/95) and Mary Downing Hahn's *Look for Me by Moonlight* (4/95). Anderson's terrific take on the theme features Chris, a typical teenager living in suburban Massachusetts, in a present exactly like our own except for the open acknowledgment of the perennial problem of vampires. Much to his horror, Chris begins to suspect that he is part of this problem; his incipient vampirism is confirmed by an agent of the Forces of Light, who seeks to enlist Chris' help in forestalling the return of Tch'muchgar, the vampire god against whom the town annually performs preventative rituals (conveniently turning them into a local festival). Promised his own redemption, Chris performs his assigned task, but his thirst for blood grows stronger, the effort to keep from slaking it grows harder, his would-be brethren grow more insistent, and redemption is nowhere in sight.

One of the pleasures of this book is that it, like its two worthy predecessors, is smart, taking the old vampire story and really thinking about it rather than merely letting the vampire go through his traditional paces until the story ends. Anderson fills out his mundane view of contemporary vampirism with credible yet surprising details: of *course* vampire imprisonment is a difficult proposition because of the feeding problems; of *course* television technology has developed special lenses to capture vampires on film; of *course* the waxing and waning of Chris' fangs screws up his new orthodontia. The book is equally perceptive about non-vampirish aspects of daily life, such as the goofy haplessness of Chris' aptly nicknamed friend, Jerk, and the Beavis-esque turn of phrase demonstrated by Chris' deprecating older brother.

Thirsty is also relentlessly and sarcastically funny, often with an adolescent flipness that's bound to please the audience. The prevailing technique is absurd detachment, usually when employing a contrast between the dark grandeur of the vampire legend and life's trivia ("Tom and Jerk should really not have broken the electric window on the Forces of Light's car"). The vampire missives to Chris are particularly hilarious: there's an engraved invitation to a ritual Gorging in the Shadows with cheerful handwritten addenda about carpooling, and there's a wickedly satiric gushy note filled with felt-tip colors, exclamation points, and smiley faces from a bubble-headed vampire Valley Girl. The tone is deftly handled, however, in that the humor eventually begins to seem a despairing mockery of defiance, like whistling in a graveyard in flames.

Which is good, because what's ultimately impressive here is the horror. Where Hahn's book emphasized the sensual aspect of vampirism and Vande Velde fo-

cused on the cerebral side, Anderson tackles the psychology, the dark emotional horror at the heart of this story. The terror here isn't sexy gore but sheer human despair: Chris has betrayed the vampires, the only ones who could offer him some assistance in surviving; he's a threat to the humans who know they are in danger from the Chris they used to love; he will either soon starve to death or be killed as a vampire. His total isolation from his friends and family means that his greatest misery lies not in being a creature he despises but in being alone. Teenagers, whether with fangs or without, will immediately empathize with that dilemma, and they'll suck this one right up. (Imprint information appears on p. 271.)

Deborah Stevenson, Assistant Editor



NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ADLER, DAVID A. *Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man*; illus. by Terry Widener. Gulliver/Harcourt, 1997 [32p]

ISBN 0-15-200523-4 \$15.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 3-5

Adler sets the historical scene for this picture-book biography by describing 1903 as "a year of great beginnings. Henry Ford sold his first automobile and the Wright Brothers made the first successful flight in an airplane. In baseball, the first World Series was played." And baseball great Lou Gehrig was born. Gehrig's youth is succinctly depicted as he grows up in an immigrant neighborhood, goes to high school and then on to college, where he signs with the New York Yankees for a \$1,500 bonus plus "a good salary." Concentrating on Gehrig's career in baseball, Adler emphasizes Gehrig's personal integrity and athletic ability, as well as his tremendous popularity with sports fans. Gehrig's physical decline and death are handled with admirable restraint while still communicating the man's personal heroism and the loss felt by his family and friends. Widener's acrylic paintings have a monumental feel to them (similar to the mythic proportions of figures in WPA murals), yet they sustain an easy appeal throughout. The layout varies in each double-page spread, from full-page illustrations to half-page to quarter page inserts, always employing generous amounts of white space and a large, clear typeface. As beginning biographies go, this one is a home run. JMD

ALCOCK, VIVIEN *The Red-Eared Ghosts*. Houghton, 1997 [272p]

ISBN 0-395-81660-2 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-8

It comes as something of a relief for Mary Frewin to discover that the "ghosts" she has been seeing since she was "in her pram" are actually denizens of a parallel world. It's even more of a relief to find two people who will admit to believing in her visions—a sympathetic teacher and the teacher's clumsy boyfriend, who boasts

a long-standing interest in things of a supernatural order. Still, Mary feels she must prove her case beyond doubt, and she finds a way to slip across the boundary into a world plagued by timequakes and peopled by men and women with a strong family likeness to herself. Alcock fudges on the physics behind the shift and blithely sends Mary and her forebears popping across time and universes without serious regard for whys and hows. If the alternate-world plot comes up a little short on credibility, Alcock's take on a perturbed adolescent hell-bent on establishing her sanity is right on the mark, and the comical cast of supporting characters—particularly Mary's embarrassed and embarrassing hairdresser mum—are affectionately drawn. EB

ANDERSON, M.T. *Thirsty*. Candlewick, 1997 248p
ISBN 0-7636-0048-2 \$17.99

R* Gr. 7-12

See this month's Big Picture, p. 269, for review.

ARNOLD, CAROLINE *Stone Age Farmers beside the Sea: Scotland's Prehistorical Village of Skara Brae*; illus. with photographs by Arthur P. Arnold. Clarion, 1997 [48p]
ISBN 0-395-77601-5 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 3-5

Skara Brae, situated in the Orkney Islands off the mainland of Scotland, is an astoundingly well-preserved site of stone-age habitation; Arnold describes the history it contains as well as the history of its discovery. She explains the general pattern of settlement in the area, the building techniques involved in creating the community, details of daily life (clothing, diet, and furniture), burial mounds, and the possible reasons for the eventual abandonment of the habitation. There's a great deal of information here, but it never really comes alive; the neolithic Orcadians seem as distant and as voiceless as Leakey's Lucy (some information about language, in fact, would have been helpful) and far less individual. Young readers may also be unsure whether the settlement's current near-underground state was original design or the result of millennia of land changes, and the book never explicitly addresses the question. The photographs vary in quality, but there are some splendid pictures of the sun-drenched stones and the dramatic island scenery. This may not win new converts to the sciences of anthropology or archaeology, but readers with a taste for the topic will appreciate this closeup of one of its more remarkable showpieces; use it with Olivier Dunrea's *Skara Brae* (BCCB 5/86) for a mutually complementary pairing that will bring the stones to life. A glossary and index are included. DS

ARNOLD, KATYA *Katya's Book of Mushrooms*; by Katya Arnold with Sam Swope; illus. by Katya Arnold. Holt, 1997 [46p]
ISBN 0-8050-4136-2 \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 3-6

This is an unusual and involving book about mushrooms, those alluring, sometimes edible fungi that can be found growing just about everywhere. Arnold begins by identifying herself as a passionate lover of mushrooms and proceeds to describe types of mushrooms, how they grow, where they grow, how to find them (goats, bears, dogs, and pigs have a particular talent for truffle hunting), and the differences among them. Arnold's linocuts combine bold colors with black out-

lines for a dramatic visual presentation of our fungal friends. Each colorful double-page spread is filled with mushrooms, all with identifying captions, and includes some small anecdote about Arnold's relationship with each one, as when her brother made sure she was "scared to death of the dangerous ones. He told me if I even touched a destroying angel and then put my finger in my mouth, I would drop dead on the spot." A section on poisonous mushrooms emphasizes what is repeated throughout the book: never never never eat a wild mushroom you cannot certainly identify. A glossary, index, and short list of recommended reading is also included. JMD

BANKS, KATE *Baboon*; illus. by Georg Hallensleben. Foster/Farrar, 1997 26p
ISBN 0-374-30474-2 \$14.00 M 3-6 yrs

Young Baboon wakes up from his nap, ready to explore the great forest that is his world. While he observes and makes conclusions, his mother offers encouraging commentary ("Baboon watched and waited for the turtle to pass. He waited a long time. 'The world is slow,' he said. 'It can be,' said his mother"). The gentle give and take of one spread does not always progress seamlessly into the next, and the pair's day becomes more a collection of isolated experiences than a cumulative story. Broad swaths of warm colors emphasize the closeness of the mother and child commentary, yet the effect is more lulling than engaging. There is no dramatic tension, as even the raging fire and the toothy crocodile become harmless extensions of the landscape. Lullabies can be lovely, but a monotonous mood is not, especially when a young baboon (a Curious George look-alike, no less) sets out on what should be an exciting day of discovery. AEB

BANYAI, ISTVAN *Rapid Eye Movement*; written and illus. by Istvan Banyai. Viking, 1997 [32p]

ISBN 0-670-87492-2 \$14.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 3-6

Having *Zoomed* (BCCB 2/95) and *Re-zoomed* (1/96), Banyai now falls into a dreaming reverie in this new wordless (or nearly wordless) picture book. Here we see all manner of transformations and self-inventions: first, a small blue figure creates itself out of a glass of water, then turns the glass into a pencil with which he draws a pool from whence he retrieves a coat; later a dog emerges from a red thread taken from that very coat, then plays with the remaining string until it becomes a vast tessellation that turns into a patterned hat. More characters become and then join in, until it becomes clear that they're all toys inhabiting a young boy's room; when the boy finally wakes and plods into the bathroom to brush his teeth, the night's revels all go down the sink with the pull of the plug. This doesn't have the focus or momentum of either of the first two books, and in a way the book's very surrealism hampers it—the sense that anything could happen means it doesn't much matter what does, since it's all going down the drain at the end anyway. The random logic of dream connection is well represented, however, and Banyai's dramatic sense of design keeps the images intriguing. Kids will especially enjoy the puzzle aspect of the book that comes from figuring out what objects are daytime-real and what objects couldn't be (most notable is a little girl with a recalcitrant shadow). Despite its wandering, the book is a visually enticing challenge; it might be particularly good for junior cartoonists or reluctant readers who aren't reluctant watchers. DS

BARON, ALAN *Red Fox and the Baby Bunnies*; written and illus. by Alan Baron. Candlewick, 1997 18p
ISBN 0-7636-0085-7 \$9.99

R 3-5 yrs

Red Fox thinks seven baby bunnies will make a fine supper, and he "ran in and out of the bushes popping them into his sack. 'Yum, yum yum!' he said." This dastardly deed is observed by our heroes, Tabby Cat and Dan Dog, who, while Red Fox naps beneath a tree, release the baby bunnies, replacing them with a canine surprise—Dan Dog. "Red Fox stared into his sack. 'WHERE ARE MY BUNNIES?' he shouted. But Red Fox's bunnies had hopped over the hill and away. 'Squeak-squeak-squeak!' they giggled." This is a very simple text with cartoony illustrations that suit the dumb "Perils of Pauline" sensibility of the tale. The yellow-frosted lapinettes frolic in a butterfly-bedecked green meadow while the comically villainous Fox lurks in the bushes, and (our heroes) Dan Dog and Tabby Cat soak their tootsies in a pond observed by a dispassionate goldfish. This is a slight tale that nonetheless makes a nifty storytime narrative with just enough tension to keep those preschool suspense lovers on the edge of their carpet squares. JMD

BEHAN, BRENDAN *The King of Ireland's Son*; illus. by P. J. Lynch. Orchard, 1997 [32p]
ISBN 0-531-09549-5 \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 5-7 yrs

Brendan Behan's cunning fillips of phrase curl around this tale of a king's son sent to find the source of the heavenly music pervading his father's kingdom. After journeying to and through a mythic dark tunnel inhabited by three men, each older than the last, he finds a beautiful young woman playing her harp, unfortunately located in the mansion of a giant. There ensues a life-and-death, hide-and-seek contest which the king's son wins with the help of a magic stallion. He then marries the girl, who happens to be the daughter of the King of Greece. Lynch's paintings are of the big-as-life-and-twice-as-natural school, with excellent drafting, skillfully varied perspectives, riotous action, and humorous characters. If the heroine seems a bit glamorized, the villain makes up for it, and the old men have a downright Rackhamish energy. The dramatic images will project well in a group, and the text was born to be read aloud—literally, since it was transcribed from a tape recording and only later published as part of *Brendan Behan's Island*. BH

BERRY, JAMES *Everywhere Faces Everywhere*; illus. by Reynold Ruffins. Simon, 1997 [96p]
ISBN 0-689-80996-4 \$16.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 8-12

Berry, poet and novelist (*Ajeemah and His Son*, BCCB 11/92, etc.), here presents a new collection of his own poetry drawn from "my Caribbean childhood and my grown-up work here in the United Kingdom." Some of the poems are previously published, but most are original for this volume, which is divided into five thematic sections explained in the introduction. Unfortunately the first section, "Bits of Early Days," is not the strongest, and its perspective on childhood is often so distanced and adult that young readers may find the viewpoint alien. Less than successful too are some of the more overtly message-driven poems, where the language tends to flatten under the force of the message. There are, however, quite a

few poems where thoughtfulness marries rhythm and sound ("Okay, Brown Girl, Okay"), where alliteration and repetition draw readers into a shared vision ("Night Comes Too Soon"), and where images and events surprise and, perhaps, amuse ("A *Sad Sad* Nick"). The verses here sing particularly well when read aloud; share them that way with kids who resist reading poetry—or try to get them to share with each other. Reviewed from an unillustrated galley. DS

BILLINGSLEY, FRANNY *Well Wished*. Karl/Atheneum, 1997 [176p]
ISBN 0-689-81210-8 \$16.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 4-7

Nuria is eleven and living with "the Avy," her grandfather, in the village of Bishop Mayne. She is the only child in the village, for a foolish wish cast into the village Wishing Well has resulted in all the families leaving in fear for their young. Nuria knows the rules of the contrary Well by heart, although she has no intention of making a wish since the Well always causes them to "go wrong." The arrival of the disabled Catty changes Nuria's mind, however, and her allotted wish is made: "I wish . . . that Catty had a body just like mine!" And she does. Catty has Nuria's body, and Nuria has hers, and Catty is unwilling to give up Nuria's healthy body for her own wheelchair-bound one. Billingsley has done an admirable job of fully evoking a fantasy place and time that feels *almost* as real as here and *almost* as current as not so long ago. The descriptive language creates a strong awareness of the understated magic present throughout the novel ("The hummingbirds' eggs were specks of light in the woven cup of their nest"). The characterization of Nuria is heartbreakingly, fiercely funny in her rampantly poetic imagination and longing emotional needs; Catty is a doll-like poor little rich girl, whose desire to stay free of her hated chair is understandable even as the means she employs are reprehensible. The minor characters are nicely realized, and they stand out as individual personalities against the backdrop of Christmas revels and minor magic. Though all's well that ends well, the conclusion avoids sentimentality and patness as the re-established friendship of Nuria and the wish-recovered Catty is depicted with the same understated crispness that made it so appealing throughout. JMD

BITTON-JACKSON, LIVIA *I Have Lived A Thousand Years: Growing Up in the Holocaust*. Simon, 1997 [224p]
ISBN 0-689-81022-9 \$17.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 7-12

This memoir covers the last fourteen months of World War II, during which thirteen-year-old Elli Friedmann (as the author was then named) and members of her family are deported from their home in Czechoslovakia (occupied by Hungarian and Nazi forces) to two ghettos and several camps, including Auschwitz. Elli's aunt is immediately gassed, her father dies in a labor camp two weeks before it's liberated, and Elli's brother, separated from the rest of the family, is more corpse-like than alive when they're reunited at Waldlager. The detailed narrative belongs to Elli and her mother, who manage to survive through a combination of luck and super-human determination. While intensely involving, Bitton-Jackson's account maintains some distance from the excruciating descriptions and ultimate hopelessness of stories such as Pausewang's *Final Journey* (BCCB 12/96). Three out of four in Elli's nuclear family survive, sometimes by seemingly miraculous twists of fate, which can be seen as either reassuring for young readers or deceptive about

the more common decimation of total families. Occasional lapses of explanation include Elli's mother's quick recovery from paralysis after an accident or, on a smaller scale, Elli's suddenly having shoes that fit—we've seen her feet bleeding from a pair two sizes too small but are not told how or when she got new ones. These points are minor in relation to the consistently strong adolescent viewpoint, the compelling force of events, and the convincing particulars of individual memory. Add this title, along with Tatjana Wassiljewa's *Hostage of War*, reviewed below, to the growing number of recollections by those who suffered as young victims of World War II. BH

BLOOM, VALERIE *Fruits: A Caribbean Counting Poem*; illus. by David Axtell. Holt, 1997 26p
ISBN 0-8050-5171-6 \$15.95 R 4-7 yrs

Counting is really just a happy excuse for Bloom's juicy verse (taken from her adult poetry collection) about a young Jamaican girl who teaches her little sister the joys of sneaking, hoarding, and chowing down on luscious island fruits. "Seven mango! What a find! De smaddy who lef dem really kind./ One fe you an' six fe me,/ If you want more, climb de tree." Gluttony takes its toll though, and in the end big sister moans, "Ten banana, mek dem stay,/ Ah feelin' really full today./ Mek me lie down on me bed, quick./ Lawd, ah feelin' really sick." Even without the benefit of illustration, the narrator's joyful cunning and sly wit suffuse the verse. Axtell's grainy full-page scenes, in a palette of tropical fruit colors that manage to be brilliant but not garish, are a glorious bonus, and the opening glossary of exotic fruits will set the taste buds tingling. Adults readers who are timid about tackling the island Patwa should just throw caution to the wind; it would be a shame to leave this one hanging on the vine. EB

BLUTHENTHAL, DIANA CAIN *Matilda the Moocher*; written and illus. by Diana Cain Bluthenthal. Jackson/Orchard, 1997 [32p]
Library ed. ISBN 0-531-33003-6 \$16.99
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-30003-X \$15.95
Reviewed from galleys R 4-7 yrs

The meek may very well inherit the earth—and it'll probably be because they were swindled out of their fair share on the playground. Next-door neighbor Matilda is forever borrowing Libby's bike, inviting herself to picnics, and wheedling quarters for ice cream. It's not until Libby finds her favorite socks on Matilda's feet that she faces up to the truth about her freeloading friend: "I'm beginning to think Matilda is a *moocher*." Confrontation not being Libby's style (she's a modern-day Victorian, with her hair swept up like a couple of jellyrolls), she evades lively Matilda's endless stream of requests and avoids a class pair-up by going home sick. Tiny cartoon details in the gouache and ink illustrations extend Libby's careful commentary and chronicle Matilda's crimes, as Libby and her toy friends look on in politely restrained horror as Matilda gobbles eight sandwiches at once or squanders half a bottle of Libby's glue. Libby's escalating paranoia regarding future mooching eventually leads to Matilda's expressing her appreciation of her friend, but Bluthenthal is true to her characters and to her audience by not engineering wholesale personality changes to achieve a happy ending. As Matilda hands over a box of cupcakes, Libby quips, "I rub my eyes. Is this MATILDA? Yes, it's her. She's wearing my hat." AEB

BORDEN, LOUISE *The Little Ships: The Heroic Rescue at Dunkirk in World War II*; illus. by Michael Foreman. McElderry, 1997 [32p]

ISBN 0-689-80827-5 \$15.00

Reviewed from galleys

Ad 7-9 yrs

In this fictionalized account of the "miracle at Dunkirk," a woman recounts how, as a fisherman's daughter on the Kent coast in 1940, she donned boy's clothing to join her father in the fleet of naval vessels and private small craft that would ferry soldiers from the besieged French coast to Dover. "It was like an amazing armada. *Armada*. It was a word from my schoolbook. And there I was, in the middle of the biggest armada of all." Although all the details which should produce a tense and engaging wartime story are present, the distanced formality of the reminiscence seems unlikely to capture the picture-book set ("I saw two men, side by side, in a half-swamped rowboat, pulling on oars for hours, ferrying a beaten army, a few men at a time"), while the rather contrived viewpoint of a little girl who has sneaked in on the mission seems to preclude an older audience with a defined interest in World War II. Foreman's sweeping watercolor land- and seascapes, with their carefully spaced ships and neat rows of soldiers running along the beach (uniforms clean and bandages unstained), make the evacuation seem extraordinarily tidy. An author's note on the "deliverance" and excerpts from Churchill's speech to Parliament ("Wars are not won by evacuations . . .") may, however, assist social studies teachers integrating this title into their curriculum. EB

BORTZ, FRED *To the Young Scientist: Reflections on Doing and Living Science*. Watts, 1997 [128p] illus. with photographs

ISBN 0-531-11325-6 \$22.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 6-10

Seven biographical interview/essays with scientists working in fields as diverse as archaeology and internal combustion engines encourage readers already fascinated by science to consider the preparation, skills, and work ethic necessary for professional success in these highly competitive fields. While providing some background on their academic discipline and accomplishments, Bortz generally lets his subjects speak for themselves, allowing readers to compare the playful enthusiasm of Richard Smalley for his buckminsterfullerenes, carbon molecules with, as yet, no known use ("We like to say that Bucky still hasn't got a job"), with the passionate humanism of ethicist Indira Nair ("Physicists forget that there is one thing that hasn't been subsumed under physics, and that's life"). Bortz occasionally interjects some homiletics ("Those who have prepared themselves and believe in themselves seize their good fortune and build on it"), but fortunately his subjects are strong enough to withstand these intrusions. A glossary, index, and résumé-style inserts extend the usefulness of this title to report writers looking for leads on current topics in scientific research. EB

BOTTNER, BARBARA *Bootsie Barker Ballerina*; illus. by G. Brian Karas. HarperCollins, 1997 [40p] (I Can Read Books)

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-027101-9 \$14.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-027100-0 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 2-3

Our narrator, Bernie, is entreated by his friend Lisa to join her in ballet class because she is afraid of the dreaded Bootsie Barker. Those who recall the titular

menace from *Bootsie Barker Bites* (BCCB 9/92) will realize how poorly that name goes with the appellation of ballerina: Bootsie trips people, pushes them down, and generally commits mayhem while passing the blame onto Lisa and Bernie ("Perhaps we are not ready for boys," sighs Madame). Finally Lisa and Bernie trick Bootsie into revving into overdrive, running over Madame, and dancing out the door, whereupon she is shut out forever. Bootsie is even more of a terror than before—in fact, the farce has a creepily helpless edge, with the repeated unfairness, that may well tie right into the fantasies of the beleaguered. The solution doesn't, frankly, pack the punch that Bootsie does, and even her evil is predictable rather than Machiavellian. The bully beat is still a satisfying story, however, and this is a nice twist on the usual setting and stereotypes (especially Bernie's wise coach, who is eager for his player to continue ballet). Karas' illustrations are effervescent with life as the characters spin and leap and the teacher seemingly transforms herself at will into the creatures her dancing suggests; Bootsie's evil row-of-tombstones grin marks her as trouble from the start, but the double-exposed blur of her performance as a tornado does make it look like an awful lot of fun. This isn't quite as effective as one might wish, but it'll keep young ballerinas on their toes. DS

BUNTING, EVE *Trouble on the T-Ball Team*; illus. by Irene Trivas. Clarion, 1997 [32p]

ISBN 0-395-66060-2 \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 5-8 yrs

The Dodgers is a hot T-ball team on a winning streak, except they keep losing something, and it's not games. Linda is the last one on the team to lose hers and finally she, too, joins the others in losing—her first tooth. Bunting's somewhat coy story features budding baseball players, all consumed by their common (and age-prescribed) losses. Despite numerous hints, the author nevertheless manages to keep the mystery unsolved until the very end. Trivas is a fully compliant accessory to the fact—her sly pastel watercolor illustrations hide the gap-toothed evidence while insightfully showing the youngsters' sublime inattention to the game. The greatest mystery of all, however, is the seeming ambidexterity of the players, first wearing their gloves on one hand, then the other. Could Generation Y be loaded with switch hitters? Introduce this one to the fans on opening day—they'll sink their teeth into it. SSV

BURKS, BRIAN *Soldier Boy*. Harcourt, 1997 [160p]

Trade ed. ISBN 0-15-201218-4 \$12.00

Paper ed. ISBN 0-15-201219-2 \$5.00

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 6-9

When bare-knuckles boxer Johnny McBane refuses to throw a match and his crooked agent sends thugs in pursuit, the oversized teenager takes refuge in the United States Army, figuring that a life of adventure in the West is preferable to sudden death in a Chicago alley. The recruiter turns a blind eye to Johnny's obvious youth, and in a flash the young man is stationed in Bismarck at Fort Abraham Lincoln, learning to ride a horse with Custer's Seventh Cavalry. As he did in *Runs with Horses* (BCCB 12/95), Burks evinces a keen sense of dramatic irony, sending another young character on the brink of manhood into what every history student knows will be a doomed mission. "We'll round up all them renegade devils, and what we ain't killed, we'll put back on the reservation," boasts one of Johnny's comrades at arms. However, between that barracks bluster and

Johnny's death in a brief but thunderous battle scene, Burks must deal with the tedium of training and waiting, and he fills his pages with ephemeral episodes that, however accurate, are extremely slow moving. "The Scholar," a soldier whose chief role in the story seems to be explaining Manifest Destiny to young recruits, is a serviceable but dull contrivance for laying issues of government/Indian relations before the readers. Still, those with an interest in the backstage events of Little Big Horn may want to sign up anyway. EB

CALHOUN, MARY *Flood*; illus. by Erick Ingraham. Morrow, 1997 40p

Library ed ISBN 0-688-13920-5 \$15.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-13919-1 \$16.00

R 6-9 yrs

Midwesterners don't have to go very far back in their memories to remember the extremely wet weather of 1993. Calhoun ably portrays in a fictionalized pictorial what this natural disaster meant to young Sarajeau's family living along the Mississippi River during that fateful summer when water was in all the wrong places. With a brooding intensity, watercolor and pencil illustrations impressively convey the imminent danger: water-invaded cornfields, darkly pregnant stormclouds, the sandbagging efforts of resolute residents. Particularly poignant is the portrait of Sarajeau peering anxiously from a window, the panes reflecting the flood's menacing presence. Text and pictures combine to create a moody atmosphere of familial dramas played against mounting peril. Sarajeau protests as her dog is taken to higher ground ("Sarajeau stamped out her feelings on the stairs, carrying up canned foods and saucepans, ice coolers and bags of ice"); Grandma stubbornly refuses to evacuate ("Your father died in this house. You were born here. I'm staying"). When the inevitable happens ("Levee's broke! Everybody get out now!"), the family leaves, but this is not a tale of despair. Good old Midwestern optimism prevails in the face of calamity: "We can handle it, rebuild if we have to." An epilogue provides brief facts about a summer many would like to forget but probably never will. PM

CORMIER, ROBERT *Tenderness*. Delacorte, 1997 [240p]

ISBN 0-385-32286-0 \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 10-12

This is a fast-paced story of a secret serial killer released from juvenile prison with every intention of killing again. Eric Poole confessed to the murders of his mother and stepfather citing physical abuse, the "evidence" of which he inflicted on himself. What the tabloid press doesn't know (and what the reader knows from the outset) is that Eric has also killed three teenage girls, all of whom bear a remarkable resemblance to his mother. Eric has carefully planned his renewed search for "tenderness" (a euphemism he uses for his sexual feelings as he kills) upon gaining his freedom, but he hasn't planned on the arrival of the obsessive, flagrantly sexual Lori, nor for the dogged determination of Jake Proctor, the cop who knows Eric's a killer. Told from alternating points of view—that of the troubled and oddly innocent Lori and the omniscient narrator who reveals the motives and actions of the charming teenage psychopath Eric and of Jake Proctor—the story is immediately involving. Cormier's simple, unsensational text depicts a swiftly escalating, ever more sensational plot. The action takes place over a short period of time, and the pacing is so quick that the plot holds together despite its clichéd action and stock characterization. The sexually precocious teenage girl looking for love with

Mr. Wrong is not a new character, nor is the seen-too-much cop and the handsomely boyish killer. Cormier draws on the successful methods of thrillers and serial melodrama, with a climax and dénouement reminiscent of *The Postman Always Rings Twice* in the accidental death that results in Eric's arrest and apparently final imprisonment. The book attempts to make Eric sympathetic, suggesting that he and Lori may each be the savior the other needs. Only the dead Lori truly elicits compassion, however, and there is too little too late to convince the reader that Eric is not the monster the detective believes him to be. JMD

DAVOL, MARGUERITE W. *Batwings and the Curtain of Night*; illus. by Mary GrandPré. Kroupa/Orchard, 1997 32p
Library ed. ISBN 0-53133005-2 \$16.99
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-30005-6 \$15.95 R 5-8 yrs

In this original creation story Davol posits a divine creator, "The Mother of All Things," who, standing "where the four corners of the world meet," creates the sun, all the earth's flora and fauna, and a curtain of night with no stars or moon. The night animals combine forces to pull back the "curtain" just a little, and after several attempts, Owl and the bats reach the curtain of night: "Every bat grabbed with its claws. Hanging upside down, they pulled and pulled together. Owl, too, dug in her great talons. She yanked and tugged. But the curtain of night did not budge." The animals believe they are defeated, but when they look up at the night sky they see that where each claw had clung, there is a glitter of light. Thus the moon and stars are created, as is the batty habit of clinging upside down. Davol has a fine hand with language and rhythm, and her ability to reproduce the traditional tale structure makes this text easily adaptable to reading and telling aloud. GrandPré's illustrations are a bit slick, but they have a graceful solidity about them that is remarkably suited to the story, as The Mother of All Things (a Nordic-looking maternal figure with a crown of golden braids and long flowing hair) sweepingly creates, reaching into her pockets for handfuls of seeds and shaking her "ample skirts" to tip out the world's creatures. JMD

DEGENS, T. *Freya on the Wall*. Browndeer/Harcourt, 1997 [288p]
ISBN 0-15-200210-3 \$17.00
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 7-12

The time is the spring of 1990 and the place is East Germany. Fourteen-year-old Freya is telling her American cousin about the fall of the Berlin Wall and the family events that led up to Freya, her mother, and grandmother's all being in Berlin on that November night in 1989. Degens' ambitious telling is not only non-linear but filtered through the lens of family myth and refracted in Freya's understanding of chaos theory. The results are occasionally bewildering, as frequently evidenced by Freya's speech: "Chaos toppled the rules of communism. It was simply a matter of the higher scientific law superseding the lower" or "people are matter and they set matter in motion." Degens excels, though, at challenging our Western biases: not all families were eager to flee to the West or felt seriously deprived; in fact, Freya admits that her isolation may have protected her from the greed and materialism shown by her West German cousin Bille. Through Freya's eyes, we see the condescension of Western relatives and we feel her betrayal by her best friend's flight over the wall. The contradictions of life in a totalitarian state are skillfully presehted: Freya's grandmother, a master storyteller, yearns for free-

dom of speech, yet carefully censors her own past. The grandmother's romantic idealism and her affectionate relationship with Freya animate this story. It's a jolt, then, when the narrator inexplicably describes an absent American cousin with Down Syndrome as "a retard," "an amiable toad," "froggy," and "amphibious." Nevertheless, this may be the only novel about the fall of the Berlin Wall, and you can bet that it's the only one discussing chaos theory, too. SSV

DEMI, ad. *Buddha Stories*; ad. and illus. by Demi. Holt, 1997 26p
ISBN 0-8050-4886-3 \$16.95 R 5-8 yrs

All the librarians who have been holding onto dog-eared copies of Ellen Babbitt's *Jataka Tales* and *More Jatakas* can take heart. Here is a picture-book collection of eleven Jataka tales retold in a formal yet straightforward style. Included are well-known tales such as "Tortoise and the Two Geese," in which a talkative tortoise opens his mouth one too many times, and "The Lion King," a sort of a Jataka Henny Penny. Also here are lesser-known thought-and-discussion-provoking stories such as "The Black Bull" (about the value of consistent kindness) and "The Little Gray Donkey" (about the folly of being deceived by appearances). An author's note gives the source of the tales as well as the historical basis for the design concept behind the elegantly sophisticated artwork. Both text and illustrations are done in gold ink on deep indigo paper, resulting in a striking visual impact. Graceful fine-line drawings are given added drama by solid gold elements and brushstrokes as the Buddha and other characters float in a starry array against a midnight-blue sky. JMD

DOLAN, EDWARD F. *Our Poisoned Waters*. Cobblehill, 1997 122p
ISBN 0-525-65220-5 \$14.99 Ad Gr 7-12

The message here is clear: the earth is depleting its water supplies much faster than they can be replenished. Dolan does a fine job explaining how we've gotten ourselves into this predicament, but his writing frequently combines rather meaningless statistics (just how much *is* 325 million cubic miles?) with awkward prose ("Much responsible for the safe water are the treatment plants that have been built . . ."). The unhappy result is the reader's interest hitting low tide. Yet the book is filled with fascinating facts: of all the water on the planet, less than 1% is fresh, and of that amount 65% is used for irrigating agriculture; in the past century, human population has increased by more than 3.5 times, and all those mouths need to be fed, but the combination of irrigation and pesticide run-off has had disastrous consequences. Encouraging a reversal of the trend, the author gives ideas for things kids can do to help conserve water. This is a solid if drab addition to your environmental collection. SSV

DONOGHUE, EMMA *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins*. Cotler/HarperCollins, 1997 [240p]
Library ed. ISBN 0-06-27576-6 \$14.89
Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-027575-8 \$14.95
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 9 up

Folklore seems to be the new Shakespeare, in that conscious reinterpretation and revisions of the classics may not be novel but their twists possess a certain inherent fascination. Donoghue's linked series of thirteen poetic short stories are infused with a feminist/lesbian sensibility: here Cinderella flees from the prince into the

arms of the fairy godmother, Beauty's beast proves to be a masked woman, and the goose girl, relieved of the burden of princesshood and queenship, insists on staying in her bucolic state. The linkages are low-key and ungimmicky, with each new story told by a character from the previous one (the female Rumpelstiltskin proves to have been Gretel, whose witch had been the princess in "Donkey-Skin," and so forth), leading to a sense of an interlocking female mythology regardless of origins (tale sources include Grimm, Perrault, and Hans Christian Andersen). Sophisticated and rich, this is perhaps the closest of all such recent YA retellings to the flavor of Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*; readers with a taste for revisionings won't want to miss it. DS

FLETCHER, RALPH *Spider Boy*. Clarion, 1997 [192p]
ISBN 0-395-77606-6 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

M Gr. 4-6

Bobby manifests his displeasure with the family's relocation and his new junior high by concocting outrageous fibs concerning his father's job and by elevating his interest in spiders from a hobby to an obsession. The lies are quickly exposed, and the embarrassment of a public apology coupled with his eccentricities make him an easy mark for the class bully, Chick Hall. When Bobby is teamed up with another newcomer—a much better-adjusted, African-American girl named Lucky Prescott—Bobby slowly begins to put his spider mania into perspective and enjoy the company of other bipeds. Fletcher lays on human/spider analogies with a heavy hand ("[The tarantula's] done what we all try to do. . . . Start over. Climbed out of her tired, old self and into a sleek new body. . . . Wouldn't it be great if it were that easy for us?"). Sporadic entries from Bobby's science journal, featuring a glut of spider data, seem to be more a haphazard science lesson for the reader than a necessary device to drive the plot. The tentative interracial romance subplot, dangerously spiced by Lucky's fascination with Chick, never quite makes it off the ground. Arachnophiles may revel in the spider trivia, but it's unlikely that the school-story crowd will bite. EB

GANTOS, JACK *Desire Lines*. Farrar, 1997 [144p]
ISBN 0-374-31772-0 \$16.00

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 9-12

Walker is an unprepossessing and friendless high-school sophomore, just trying to take the shortest route to the places he likes—which is how he happens on the lesbian affair of his classmates Karen and Jennifer, who meet by the duck pond in an old abandoned golf course. When the teenage son of an itinerant preacher starts trying to root out gay kids, "those who are destined to burn in a lake of everlasting fire," Walker gets uneasy about his secret; when the preacher boy begins a harassment campaign against Walker accusing him of being homosexual, Walker deliberately joins up with a trio of the school's finest hoods. Even this doesn't offer him safety, however, and he finally does what he feels he has to do to save himself—with terrible consequences. The shadows that clung to Gantos' *Heads or Tails* (BCCB 7/94) and *Jack's New Power* (12/95) are in full sinister force here; this takes *Killing Mr. Griffin* and moves it closer to 1984, examining at a high-school level the phenomenon of betrayal in the aid of self-preservation. What's particularly interesting is that Gantos doesn't let his victims off the hook either: Karen taunts Walker about his rumored homosexuality, and he accurately notes,

"She'd let me be called gay boy all day long, in front of the whole school, the whole town, the world, as long as she didn't have to step forward." Unfortunately, the plot (which seems truer to the '60s than to the '90s) suffers from contrivance, disjointedness, and subsumation of character by concept; one also can't help regretting the *Children's Hour* cliché of the tragic lesbian couple, however justified it is within the story. It's still got an edge and an authentic bitterness that YA fiction, despite its reputation, often lacks; teens who feel life has been overly optimistic since *The Chocolate War* will appreciate the reassuring nihilism. DS

GIBBONS, GAIL *The Honey Makers*; written and illus. by Gail Gibbons. Morrow, 1997 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-11387-7 \$15.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-11386-9 \$16.00

R Gr. 3-5

Using her trademark nonfiction format, Gibbons cheerfully distills a lot of useful information, this time about honeybees and beekeeping. An attractive, colorful package for budding beekeepers, this offers enough stuff to keep them hovering around for awhile. Fun-to-know facts ("Most eggs the queen lays are no bigger than the period at the end of this sentence") will pique the interest of even the most reluctant learner and the more active kids might try a honeybee dance—the "wag-tail" ("the number of wags per 15 seconds tells how far away the flowers are"). Honey-yellow borders serve to box in a user-friendly blend of text and bright watercolor and pencil renderings, effectively clarifying things such as bee anatomy, kinds of honeybees, bee keepers, honey production, and types of bee-hives. Also featured is "A Beekeeper's Yearbook" done journal style on a double-page spread and a concluding "HUMMM..." section that provides additional factoids for students who are buzzing for more. Couple this with Sylvia Johnson's *A Beekeeper's Year* (BCCB 7/94) and readers will be ready for apiaries of their own. PM

GIFF, PATRICIA REILLY *Lily's Crossing*. Delacorte, 1997 182p

ISBN 0-385-32142-2 \$14.95

R Gr. 4-6

Fifth-grader Lily has always looked forward to vacations in Rockaway, when she can leave her "problem list" behind—the one that lists "lies" and "friends, need"—and be a more admirable self with summer friend Margaret Dillon. But the summer of 1944 is different: Poppy, Lily's father, is gone to war, as is Margaret's brother, Eddie; there is a young refugee from Budapest named Albert living a few doors away from Lily and her grandmother; and Margaret's family is moving to Detroit so her father can build bombers. Lily and Albert are drawn together by mutual need, each child lonely, somewhat lost, yet gamely struggling to make sense of an adult world forever changed by war. Albert has left his younger sister behind in Paris, and Lily ran off when she heard the news that Poppy was leaving. Neither child said goodbye to the one he or she holds most dear and it weighs on both heavily. The sensitive characterizations are true to a ten-year-old point of view, and the personalities of Lily and Albert and even the distant Margaret are clearly presented. The seaside community is a character in itself, with the water, the sand, the butterless bakery, and even the old movie theater strongly evoked. Gentle elements of danger and suspense—as Lily sneaks into Margaret's empty house for solitude, as she and Albert rescue a kitten from drowning, and as Albert tries to row out to a convoy of ships during a storm—keep the plot moving for-

ward, while the delicate balance of characters and setting gently coalesces into a an emotional whole that is fully satisfying. This is a fine piece of historical fiction that evokes a time and place without sacrificing or taking advantage of its characters' emotional lives. Use with Mary Downing Hahn's *Stepping on the Cracks* (BCCB 12/91) for the beginning of a World War II booklist, booktalk, or bibliography. JMD

GILES, GAIL *Breath of the Dragon*; illus. by June Otani. Clarion, 1997 [112p]
ISBN 0-395-76476-9 \$14.95
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 3-5

It's unusual to find a novel that covers nine years in under a hundred pages, is set in a culture unfamiliar enough to third and fourth graders that it requires considerable explanation, and—in spite of these potential problems—still works. It works because the plot emerges honestly from the characters. Five-year-old Malila's last memory of her handsome father is his loving goodnight kiss, which opens the book; he is not a hero, however, but a thief whose death at the hands of the police makes the family outcasts in their Thailand community and drives Malila's mother to immigrate to the U.S. Malila is left with an old-fashioned grandmother she barely knows, and this is the story of their relationship, of Malila's ostracism by her peers, and of the gradual development of her keen artistic talent and love for Thai traditions. The ending is less happy than hardwon: when her grandmother dies, fourteen-year-old Malila is finally strong enough to face going to America with confidence. The writing is expository, with many descriptions or definitions of Thai words. The kind of soup Malila makes during her grandmother's final illness is explained, for instance, yet this does not interfere with the moving death scene ("Draw a grandmother in the picture, Malila. Draw her waving good-bye"). In general, the style is simple and clean, and scenes selected for emphasis are believably blended into a sense of passing years. The illustrations are comfortably literal, although one specifically contradicts the text by showing a teacher in western garb when he's described as wearing a long dark robe. Overall, though, this is an excellent choice for reading aloud or encouraging kids to read alone. BH

GONZÁLEZ, LUCÍA M., ad. *Señor Cat's Romance and Other Favorite Stories from Latin America*; illus. by Lulu Delacre. Scholastic, 1997 [48p]
ISBN 0-590-48537-7 \$17.95
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 2-4

A half-dozen tales from Latin America are cozily presented in this cheerfully illustrated collection. Familiar tales like "The Little Half Chick" and "Martina, the Little Cockroach" nestle alongside less familiar variants of the fool story "Juan Bobo and the Three Legged Pot" and the gentle trickster tales "The Billy Goat and the Vegetable Garden" and "How Uncle Rabbit Tricked Uncle Tiger." The rhyming story of "Señor Cat's Romance" has a great deal of inherent humor, but the awkwardly forced rhyme scheme makes this a prime candidate for retelling. Each tale is followed by a paragraph of "Something About the Story" and a brief glossary of Spanish words used in the text. While the source notes suffer from a lack of specificity, González' text is simple and straightforward, easily lending itself to reading aloud or storytelling. The compositions are hampered by a distracting repeating border, the drafting of human figures is occasionally stiff, and Delacre's watercolors are garishly bright. Nevertheless, the large format of full and double-page paintings gives this title a perky appeal despite the uneven presentation. JMD

HAAS, JESSIE *Westminster West*. Greenwillow, 1997 [176p]

ISBN 0-688-14883-2 \$15.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-8

At sixteen, Sue is the reliable daughter, the one on whom Mother can depend for help with the chores; Clare, a year younger, is considered too "delicate" to exert herself ever since a childhood illness and is coddled and pampered by the entire family, who have come to regard this as a normal state of affairs. When Sue is suddenly overcome with a mysterious and severe illness of her own, the sisters are forced to exchange places; Sue then learns to luxuriate in the newfound attentions lavished upon her, and Clare proves amazingly resilient under the rigors of housework. Eventually, however, both girls ache to resume their accustomed roles within the family, and when a barn burner torches their property, Sue forces herself back into action and Clare slips back, permanently, into bed. Upon this simple plot (rooted in historical fact) Haas builds a rich and sensitive portrait of a late nineteenth-century Vermont farm family, whose internal dynamic has long been defined by the father's memories of Civil War atrocities and the mother's memories of childhood loss. Plotting is smooth, prose is graceful, and details of the girls' battle of wills are incisive. Lest Haas' equestrienne fans despair that she has entirely shifted gears, be assured that it's Sue's heart-thumping midnight ride on her Morgan that summons the neighbors to save the farm. Notes on the real life family who inspired the tale are appended. EB

HENEGHAN, JAMES *Wish Me Luck*. Foster/Farrar, 1997 [208p]

ISBN 0-374-38453-3 \$16.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-8

Like most of his schoolmates in Liverpool, twelve-year-old Jamie Monaghan is ripe for the drama of war. Hitler's bombers haven't so far made it up beyond London, however, so he and his friends have time to check out the truculent new boy, Tom Bleeker, who lives next door to Jamie. When the bombings do begin in earnest, Jamie's parents decide to ship him out where it's safe, and he and Tom Bleeker are packed off to Canada—on the ill-fated *City of Benares*, which succumbs to a German torpedo attack five days out of port. The evocation of war-time life and its coexistence with a fairly normal boyhood is effective, particularly with the boys' awe at the comparatively rich living on the doomed liner. Some of the flashbacks and plot offshoots are a bit distracting, but the suspense of the adventure keeps things moving, even though we know the ship's fate from the very start (an afterword gives more details on the true story of the *City of Benares*' sinking). A tough-edged saga with a survival-story appeal, this should draw readers bored with gentle evacuee stories but not quite ready for Westall's *The Machine Gunners* (BCCB 11/76). DS

HOBAN, TANA *Construction Zone*; written and illus. with photographs by Tana Hoban. Greenwillow, 1997 33p

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-12285-X \$14.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-12284-1 \$15.00

Ad 3-6 yrs

Bulldozer. Fork lift crane. Crawler backhoe. Each star in this constellation of earth and material movers gets its own double-page spread with a full view and a close-up of the behemoth at work, simply captioned with the machine's name.

Exactly what is under construction isn't always clear, and the operation of some of the machinery is problematic: the roller and asphalt hopper cannot be seen simultaneously on the paver; the fork on the forklift is hidden by a pallet; the cherry picker is not extended to its full height. Photo reproductions don't consistently deliver the crispness or quality one expects of a photoessay. However, children who are awed by the noise and power of these monsters will be content to point and "ooh," and for those adult readers who can't identify the business end of a screwdriver, Hoban graciously appends brief descriptions of each machine. EB

HOBBS, WILL *Ghost Canoe*. Morrow, 1997 [208p]

ISBN 0-688-14193-5 \$15.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-8

Nathan MacAllister is finding life on Cape Flattery, Washington a stretch more exciting than he had anticipated when his father, a retired clipper-ship captain, took on the job of Tatoosh lighthouse keeper. Bodies have washed ashore from the wreckage of a ship bound for Canada; footprints indicate there was a survivor, and a robbery at the trading post, charcoal residue in a secluded cave, and the corpse of a murdered sea captain lead Nathan to suspect that the survivor is still in the area pursuing his own nefarious agenda. Hobbs freshens up a tried and true adventure plot with intriguing details of nineteenth-century Makah Indian life—seal and whale hunting, canoe building, burial customs, and potlatches—and a cast of equally intriguing characters, from Nathan's Makah friend and mentor Lighthouse George, to the crazed Makah outcast Dolla Bill and his villainous employer, Mr. Kane. Although the mystery itself isn't much of a puzzler, there's plenty of action between the dark-and-stormy-night opener and the murderer's inevitable demise (plunging off a cliff, weighed down by his ill-gotten gains) to keep the pages flipping. EB

HURWITZ, JOHANNA *Spring Break*; illus. by Karen Dugan. Morrow, 1997 [144p]

ISBN 0-688-14937-5 \$15.00

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 3-5

Cricket Kaufman is really looking forward to spring vacation, when she will accompany her friend Zoe on a trip to Washington, D.C. Her broken ankle puts an end to that—she's stuck at home, achy and itchy and restless, while everybody else seems to have a good time. She can't entirely write the holiday off, however, since she turns the tables by playing a prank on her sometimes friend, sometimes nemesis, Lucas Cott; she begins a friendship with quiet Sara Jane Cushman; and she creates an entry for a young people's stamp-design contest. This is on the episodic side, and both the highs and lows are a bit too well-modulated. On the other hand, the cozy familiarity of Hurwitz' characters (readers will remember Cricket from *Teacher's Pet*, BCCB 3/88, etc.) combines with the realism of the situation to make this an appealing and accessible story. Kids who've followed the adventures of this social circle will want to read the new installment. Final illustrations not seen. DS

JACQUES, BRIAN *Pearls of Lutra*; illus. by Allan Curless. Philomel, 1997 408p

ISBN 0-399-22946-9 \$19.95

Ad Gr. 5-8

Much blood has been shed for the Tears of All Oceans, the pearls once safeguarded by the otters of Holt Lutra. The evil Emperor Ublaz, nicknamed Mad Eyes for his hypnotic powers, will shed more blood in order to possess the gems, including that of his hostage, the Redwall Abbot. While the Redwall warriors battle corsairs and searats to defeat Mad Eyes, other Abbey dwellers rush to solve the riddles that will lead them to the hidden pearls, the Abbot's ransom. As the ninth book in the Redwall series, *The Pearls of Lutra* sticks to Jacques' formula (an extensive cast of characters in a rousing struggle between good and evil), but it is a formula that works. There are some sections which slow the momentum (the youngest Abbey dwellers' antics get irritating; a plot glitch has either a bankvole capable of light speed or some honest shrews telling fibs; the ending moves the Abbey leadership to the next generation rather hastily). However, the slackening is negligible, considering how fast readers are going to be turning the pages. Suspense is not a problem, and the introduction of new characters when our heroes are in a bind is usually clever and always a surprise. While familiarity with some of the earlier epics would be useful for the sake of historical context, character recognition, and practice in translating molespeak and other dialects, this book can wield the sword on its own. AEB

JOHNSON, PAUL BRETT *Farmers' Market*; written and illus. by Paul Brett Johnson. Jackson/Orchard, 1997 [28p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-531-33014-1 \$16.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-30014-5 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 4-7 yrs

Tired of the mushy tomatoes and uncrunchy cucumbers in the supermarket? Impatient for the local farmers' markets to open? While you wait, enjoy a picture-book journey with Laura, the young daughter of an entrepreneurial farm family, to the Farmers' Market in Lexington, Kentucky. Beginning in the predawn hours of a summer Saturday, where even the rising sun shimmers with anticipation, we follow Laura and her family in their truck laden with garden goodies. Rainbow-hued acrylics create an inviting carnival-like atmosphere where eager shoppers and busy vendors mingle under a canopy of mottled green trees and brightly-hued umbrellas. Laura and Betsy, her "Saturday friend," are button-nose cute (if a bit stodgily drawn) as they revel in finding a dollar bill, which to their delight means one thing only—double-fudge chocolate ice cream cones. Kids' eyes will feast on the four-page fold-out that provides a sweeping look at the festivities, although the placing of Laura on each page therein makes it look like she's in four places at once. The acrylic illustrations nearly glow with the summer sun, and the simple but informative text gives youngsters a good feel for the hard day's work and the carefree fun at such an event. PM

JORGENSEN, GAIL *Gotcha!*; illus. by Kerry Argent. Scholastic, 1997 [32p]

ISBN 0-590-96208-6 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 3-6 yrs

Poor Bertha Bear is just about to cut her seven-layer, strawberry-topped birthday cake for her party with five rotund bear friends when a never-invited-to-anything fly interrupts the festivities ("a big, BLACK, beastly fly *buzzed* in her ear, *flew* up her nose, *walked* on her pie, AND . . ."). What ensues is a chase scene that results in an energetic comedy, where even the minimal text cavorts on the page as Bertha

gyrates, slides, and galumphs through the terrain in her quest for fly hide. This is an exuberant mix of expressive text and visual animation using white space and double-page spreads to create the brown bear's headlong movement toward seeming disaster. Argent's dynamic watercolors are especially deft at evoking the comic bear-buffoonery in their addlepatented ursine grins and Bertha's foolhardy determination. "Gotcha!" never happens as Bertha barrels into obstacles that in turn reveal themselves to be a camel, a crocodile, a stork, and a tortoise who join the chase after Bertha. Kids brought up on a "make friends with kool-aid" philosophy will applaud Bertha's conciliatory offer of "Cake?" Pair with Aylesworth's *Old Black Fly* (BCCB 7/92) for a storytime chase. PM

KATZ, WILLIAM LOREN *Black Legacy: A History of New York's African Americans*. Atheneum, 1997 [256p] illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-689-31913-4 \$19.00
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 7-12

This is an exhaustive history of African Americans in New York, beginning in 1626 in New Amsterdam and ending with the ongoing excavation of the recently unearthed African Burial Ground in lower Manhattan. Proceeding chronologically, Katz describes the relatively lenient conditions for African slaves in the Dutch colony before the British takeover in 1658, after which New York became a major slave-trading port. As the population of slaves grew (on the Eastern Seaboard in the 1700s, only Charleston, South Carolina had more slaves than New York), fear of slave revolts also grew and fueled the repressive measures of the British. During the American Revolution, New York promised freedom to any African American who fought with them, but it wasn't until 1827 that New York state outlawed slavery entirely. Much of this history will be familiar (the Underground Railroad, Marcus Garvey, the Harlem Renaissance, the civil rights movement, Malcolm X), and surely the cultural stars are still celebrated (Paul Robeson, Langston Hughes, Bessie Smith, Zora Neale Hurston, Ralph Ellison, Lorraine Hansberry, Spike Lee), but having this historical motherlode all in one place makes report writing much easier. Katz's prose is gracefully accessible and devoid of self-conscious frills. Extensive photos, endnotes, a bibliography, and an index are included. SSV

KENNEDY, X. J. *Uncle Switch: Loony Limericks*; illus. by John O'Brien. McElderry, 1997 32p
ISBN 0-689-80967-0 \$15.00 R 5-8 yrs

Uncle Switch might be distantly related to the Stupids, though he may be from a more inbred branch of the family, as his reversals are more relentless and absurd. A series of limericks tells how he reads his eggs and fries the morning newspaper, makes beautiful music "when a big violin/ Tucks him under its chin/ And then scrapes his bare chest with its bow," and for Thanksgiving provides the turkey with a sumptuous repast while the people get birdseed (alert children may inquire why the people don't get served up as dinner; ignore them). The limerick isn't the most flexible of poetic forms and some of these verses suffer a bit from troubled scansion and consonantal bottleneck, but the lilt and energy stay strong. O'Brien's illustrations employ precisely dappled watercolors and detailed linework to keep things solidly silly; Uncle Switch's top-heavy bulbousness and beaky nose make him a figure reminiscent of Edward Lear's limerick protagonists, and his whiteless eyes, all black with pigmentless pupil, give him an otherworldly avian air. This is a clever entry in that perennially pleasing genre, stories about adults who get everything wrong. DS

KRAMER, STEPHEN *Eye of the Storm: Chasing Storms with Warren Faidley*; illus. with photographs by Warren Faidley. Putnam, 1997 [48p]
ISBN 0-399-23029-7 \$18.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 3-6

From April through October, photographer Warren Faidley can count on the skies to deliver stunning images to be captured on film—springtime tornadoes on the Great Plains, summer thunderstorms in the West, early autumn hurricanes in the Southeast. Kramer's narrative, generously embellished with Faidley's stock photos, follows this professional storm chaser along his various treks, lucidly explaining both the prevailing weather systems and the photographic challenges presented by each atmospheric phenomenon. Clearly, though, disaster and danger are the real draws here, and Kramer keeps the tone immediate and tense: "The parking garage began to shake. Wind slammed into the concrete walls with the force of bombs. Large sprinkler pipes . . . began to work their way loose. Several pipes collapsed and fell to the floor." Uncaptioned photographs generally coordinate with the text, but some of the more spectacular shots, such as the multicolored lightning cascading from a scarlet-aura'd storm cloud, beg for fuller explanation. Kramer finally cautions readers against dilettante dabbling in storm photography ("A bolt of lightning struck, nearly electrocuting him [an amateur photographer]. Still, the man continued to use his video camera to tape the tornado until he was hit by debris carried by the wind") and offers advice on storm safety. EB

LESTER, HELEN *Author: A True Story*; written and illus. by Helen Lester. Lorraine/Houghton, 1997 32p
ISBN 0-395-82744-2 \$10.95

R 5-8 yrs

Illustrated with humor-filled cartoons and kid-pleasing anecdotes, this is a breezy autobiography about the trials and tribulations of becoming a published author. Beginning with the opening line "A long time ago there lived a three-year-old author. Me," Lester sets the blithe tone for the simple but cogent life that follows. And what a life it is, complete with artistic suffering (she was a "mirror writer," which meant her writing was backwards), frustration ("Often I couldn't come up with a single idea, and my stories got stuck in the middle, and I couldn't think of a title, and I had trouble making the changes my teacher wanted me to make, and I lost my pencils, and I wondered why I was doing this"), disappointment ("The lucky people sent it back and said 'No thank you.' That's called a rejection, and I decided I'd never write again"), perseverance ("Until the next day, when I felt better"), and success ("I never dreamed I'd become an author. So this is better than a dream come true"). It makes you want to run right out and sharpen your pencils. JMD

MCGUIRE, RICHARD *What's Wrong with This Book?*; written and illus. by Richard McGuire. Viking, 1997 30p
ISBN 0-670-86852-3 \$14.99

R 6-9 yrs

What *is* wrong with this book? Well, it's not wrong so much as deceptive, or inverted, or teasing. First we have a title page—but in mirror writing; then we have pages with die-cut holes showing bits of the scene beyond—which is not what the glimpses would have you believe; then we have shadowplay games, a variety of optical illusions, and some landscapes with some very odd detailing.

The cohesion is pretty illusory too, since the unremarkable rhyming text (a couplet for each spread) is the only thing holding it all together, but that doesn't prevent the book from offering fine entertainment for entry-level puzzlers. McGuire's neo-retro style and palette will be familiar to readers of *Night Becomes Day* (BCCB 12/94) and *What Goes Around Comes Around* (11/95); here his clean-edged and clean-lined cut-outs-manqué are filled with absurd details (a burning house fleeing a fireman, a shark cutting its way through the sand, and a tree branch that is actually a notably Magrittian pipe). Another visual puzzle, also worthy of the surrealists, is the question of layering: the die-cut pages provide actual layers, the final landscapes seem to have been collage, and some of the earlier spreads add shadows to the color planes resulting in a faux-collage effect, so what's on top of what and where? This isn't as elegant as Banyai's *Zoom* (BCCB 2/95), but it's a cheerful cornucopia of visual challenges that will provide a nice bridge between the Hidden Picture page in *Highlights* and postmodern picture books. DS

MACKEL, KATHY *A Season of Comebacks*. Putnam, 1997 [112p]
ISBN 0-399-23026-2 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 4-6

Fourth-grader Molly is tired of living in the shadow of her big sister, Allie. Allie is the hottest softball pitcher in the state, the darling of her father (who is also her coach), and an incipient media star, and Molly's own softball interest only heightens the contrast. Soon problems in Allie's team necessitate drafting Molly, which puts her under big-league pressure just as things are getting harder for her sister. The story is ultimately pretty predictable, and the facile reconciliation between the sisters and with their father comes out of nowhere and happens too early, depriving the last third of the book of emotional tension. The book has some winning depictions of team camaraderie and some authentic depictions of parental favoritism and sibling resentment, however, and it's an amiable sports story. DS

MANY, PAUL *These Are the Rules*. Walker, 1997 [160p]
ISBN 0-8027-8619-7 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 7-10

The summer between junior and senior year is a bit of a roller coaster for narrator Colm as he tries to cope with his parents' separation, his simmering lust for the self-absorbed Carmella, the challenge of swimming across the lake, and his unacknowledged attraction to summer friend Marlene. As Colm wrestles with his reactions to his critical father (he quit the swim team in response to his father's fanatical perfectionism) and tries to support his apparently admirable if somewhat separation-stunned mother, he welcomes the physical distraction of his summer job digging wells. After being dumped for another guy with a better car by the fatuous Carmella, Colm turns to the lake for solace and starts swimming. The description of the suspenseful swim (he doesn't realize until he's gone too far that he might not make it to the other side) and the appearance of the wisely patient, finally kissed Marlene make for a satisfyingly effective climax. Colm's narration has a thoughtful, low-key quality that evokes the turmoil and exasperation of his emotional reality while keeping him believable as a teenager just trying to figure things out. The lakeside summer community and its inhabitants are sturdily depicted in language that describes the water, the sand, the amusement park rides, etc. in a strong, physical way. Colm is a likable protagonist in an absorbing plot, and that makes this a winner all around. JMD

MAYNE, WILLIAM *Lady Muck*; illus. by Jonathan Heale. Houghton, 1997 [32p]

ISBN 0-395-75281-7 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R* 6-9 yrs

In this luscious story of greed, rationalization, and pork, a companionable old couple of pigs decide to make their fortune by selling newly dug truffles in the marketplace. It's a hazardous journey for the fungi, however: Sowk had initially dissuaded her dear Boark from chomping the delicacies down on the spot, but their siren olfactory song starts to lure her. Fearing that the smallest truffle is having an upsetting journey, she takes him out to "nursey him a bit," but "he was frightened, jumping in among her teeth, running down the red lane to tummy, and happy there." Soon her laudable concern for the truffle family leads her to invite another in for company, then to save yet another from travel bruises by carrying it safely inside her stomach, then to succor the little baby truffles by sending their mother down to join them, until finally there's only one left ("And that naughty one ate up the rest, then?" says a well-deceived Boark). One truffle doesn't get Sowk her desired coach, coachman, and high status, but she's happy enough with a wooden wheelbarrow (even though it quickly breaks), the appellation "Lady Muck," and a nice muddy wallow. What makes this more than a tidily amusing tale is Mayne's language; both narration and dialogue are in a rich country pigalect that depends on rhythm and -y suffixes and flows like James Joyce; it's original enough to require a preperformance readthrough, but it makes the book sing. Each spread has a watercolor-tinted woodcut and a homelier, less formal freehand watercolor scene or two; there's a bit of friction between the two styles, but the bucolic landscape and the matter-of-fact flop-eared pigs are vividly and cozily realized in both. This needs a reader-aloud's affection to really take off, so dump the inhibitions and be prepared to go the whole hog. DS

MILLS, CLAUDIA *Losers, Inc.* Farrar, 1997 [160p]

ISBN 0-374-34661-5 \$16.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 4-7

Ethan Winfield has a journal devoted to the proposition that Life Isn't Fair (and not in his favor, either); he and his friend Julius finally decide to form a club, Losers, Inc., based on their bottom-of-the-heapness. The arrival of beauteous student teacher Grace Gunderson makes Ethan reconsider his commitment to losing, however, and he eventually starts work on a pretty nifty project for the science fair. Meanwhile, chance keeps throwing him together with brainy but unpopular Lizzie Archer, who develops a crush on him when he, mostly for Grace Gunderson's sake, is awkwardly kind to her in the face of schoolmates' cruelties. Mills takes a passel of smaller shifts and incidents and brings them together capably, creating a credible portrayal of a kid who's beginning to realize that even if he's not the best he can be good enough. As usual, the author is particularly good at simple expression of complex characters and relationships: Ethan's older brother Peter isn't a lucky attention hog but a hardworking good guy genuinely desirous of Ethan's success, and Ethan's friend Julius (who might well merit a book all his own) is both loyal to his old friend and troubled by Ethan's new ambitions. Stories of maturation don't have to be heavy-handed; here's a well-crafted and accessible one to prove it. DS

MITCHELL, BARBARA *Waterman's Child*; illus. by Daniel San Souci. Lothrop, 1997 [40p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-10862-8 \$15.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-10861-X \$16.00

Reviewed from galleys

M 5-8 yrs

Great-grandma, Grandma, and Mama all married watermen of the Chesapeake Bay area. Annie, Mama's daughter, traces her roots in this unengaging picture book, which leaves readers nearly drowning in sentimental generalities and plenty of confusion. At least six different locations are mentioned, although only two really take on any great significance in the story. We are never told what a "skip-jack" is, though presumably it is a boat ("You can count the skipjacks on two hands now," Great-Grandpa tells his audience). Shoveling shell onto a new oyster bed apparently effects the health of baby oysters, but how? In addition, an undertow of tedious dialogue ("‘Sure hope there's a market,’ the captain said. ‘We'll make do,’ said Grandma. ‘Always have,’ said Great-Grandma") plagues the narrative, which spans three generations but never goes anywhere. The only thing that rescues this account from total shipwreck is the charm of the framed watercolor paintings, which idealize times past in an array of lovely seascapes and simple village scenes. San Souci uses the blues, khakis, and russets of maritime life, with its billowing white sails and clapboard houses, to evoke a way of life that deserves a better memoir. PM

MOONEY, BEL *The Voices of Silence*. Delacorte, 1997 [144p]

ISBN 0-385-32326-3 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 6-8

Thirteen-year-old Flora Popescu's account of personal incidents prior to the 1989 overthrow of the Romanian dictator Ceausescu is a microcosm of the contemporary political situation. When a new classmate named Daniel Ghiban offers her friendship and "privileged" food that he claims to have gotten through his mother's work at an embassy, Flora's best friend Alys becomes suspicious and the two girls fall out. Even after the teacher and another classmate are arrested, Flora blindly confides to Daniel her painful discovery that her rebellious father plans to escape the country. Then Alys, whose parents are active in the underground, warns that Flora's father is about to be arrested by the secret police. The national tension explodes in a climactic battle at Palace Square, which the two girls witness. Mooney perceptively weaves the normal strains between adolescent and parents into the abnormal stress of families suffering poverty and dangerous oppression. Although the machinery of plot and characterization is open to view, the details are convincing and the dramatic action—except for occasionally overt explanations from the narrator—reveals the situation without expository burden. BH

NIMMO, JENNY *Griffin's Castle*. Orchard, 1997 [208p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-531-33006-0 \$17.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-30006-4 \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 5-7

Dinah and her mother Rosalie have landed in yet another new set of digs, this time in a ramshackle house provided for them by Rosalie's employer-*cum*-lover Gomer

Gwynne. As much as she loves the crumbling old edifice, Dinah resents Gomer's intrusion into their lives, and Gomer could easily do without Rosalie's mouthy, unattractive dependent. As the hostilities swell, Dinah finds that she can call to life several of the stone grotesques that adorn a wall surrounding a near-by castle, and these mysterious animals, visible at first only to Dinah but sensed by everyone, initially seem to be her protectors. However, when Dinah contrives to be alone in the house for the Christmas holidays, these protectors threaten to hold her forever within the rotting, toppling house. Suspense builds steadily as our prickly, independent heroine courts the fellowship of the grotesques and spurns the proffered friendship of her schoolmates. The action ultimately stumbles over several ill-developed subplots (a tenant family in the basement, Gomer's mother in a nursing home, a great-grandfather in the mountains, and a menagerie of grotesques with questionable intentions), until, like the house itself, the story threatens to collapse under its own weight. Still, readers charmed by an emotionally vulnerable heroine surrounded by moldy walls and foggy Cardiff streets will be pleased to curl up with some hot chocolate and this title. EB

PETERSON, CRIS *Horsepower: The Wonder of Draft Horses*; illus. with photographs by Alvis Upitis. Boyds Mills, 1997 32p
ISBN 1-56397-626-9 \$15.95

R 5-8 yrs

Big, powerful, and gentle, draft horses fascinate most kids who have encountered them. Peterson focuses on three draft breeds, the Percheron, the Belgian, and the Clydesdale, and uses specific farms and horses to demonstrate the breeds in action. The book includes appealing details about Kate being hitched up, Bonnie working with her team, and Warrior's show training while tossing in more general tidbits about heavy horses and farming. Information is conveyed colorfully (the Percheron mare is "as tall as a basketball player and weighs as much as a classroom of first-graders"), but one occasionally wishes for some more specific facts (how many draft horses are there now, how much weight can they pull, and just how much does a classroom of first graders weigh anyway?). Page layout is stodgy and photographs don't always seem to go with the text; nonetheless, the pictures are bright and extremely lively, with kids abounding in most shots and the gentle giants both glorious and workmanlike. There are a lot of missed opportunities here, but the book does convey the jingle of the harness, the scent of the ploughed fields, and the appeal of the big guys. DS

ROCKLIN, JOANNE *For Your Eyes Only!*; illus. by Mark Todd. Scholastic, 1997 [144p]
ISBN 0-590-67447-1 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 4-6

Lucy K. Keane has decided she's in love with her new sixth-grade teacher, Mr. Moffat. Lucy's a budding poet, and she's impressed with the fact that Mr. M chalks poems on the board and gets the class to discuss them, as well as the fact that he's provided all the students with journal notebooks, which is where she's writing these very observations. Lucy's journal tells of her explorations into poetry, her relationship with her mother (whom, she hopes, will soon remarry), the tensions between her and her best friend, Beatrice, and her running war with classmate Andy. Interspersed with her entries are Mr. Moffat's blackboard poems and selections from other journals, particularly Andy's, which shed a different light on his

obstreperous behavior. The teacher-provided-journal idea isn't particularly original and has been done better, and the whole enterprise (especially the part where Andy's journal confidences about his abuse result in the teacher's getting the family help that solves the situation) has a programmatic flavor. Lucy's incipient poet status, however, is respectfully conveyed, and her relationship dilemmas are sympathetically drawn. Readers will appreciate the open and varied format (including drawings from Andy) and will, as usual, relish the idea of peering into somebody else's life. DS

ROCKWELL, ANNE *Once Upon a Time This Morning*; illus. by Sujie Stevenson. Greenwillow, 1997 [24p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-68814707-0 \$14.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-14706-2 \$15.00

Reviewed from galleys

M 2-4 yrs

"Once upon a time" begins each of the ten stories in this collection for toddlers, but these are not tales of bygone days or knights in shining armor. Rockwell offers tiny stories, complete on each double-page spread, that have tiny plots and lots of predictability. In "The Little Girl Who Didn't Want a Bath," the girl in question only succumbs to bathing when "that great big whale had such a happy smile that the little girl decided she wanted to take a bath, too." Wow, that was easy. "Mine!", a tale of two-year-old possessiveness, ends in a stream of didactic dribble ("After that the two little boys always played together very nicely and very politely, and neither one ever said 'Mine! Mine! Mine!' again"). In a more successful tale, "Purple and Purple," a little girl takes leave of her purple passion and succumbs to the lure of pink sneakers ("But they're not purple," her mother said. "I know," said the little girl. "Now I like pink"). Perfectly understandable. Although the pastel-hued acrylic and ink illustrations adroitly placed on the white background have an exuberant, whimsical quality, they are unable to liberate the stories, which are encumbered by a generic text where every child is a nameless "little boy" or "little girl." This blandness and a conspicuous lack of involving conflict, which anyone who has ever had a two-year-old knows is impossible, means that this collection, although pretty to look at, won't keep a toddler on your lap for long. PM

ROOT, PHYLLIS *Rosie's Fiddle*; illus. by Kevin O'Malley. Lothrop, 1997 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-12853-X \$15.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-12852-1 \$16.00

R 6-9 yrs

Rosie O'Grady is reclusive and ornery ("If Rosie O'Grady ever smiled, no one but her chickens had ever seen it"). But Rosie can play the fiddle so well that folks hide in the bushes to hear it, and the story of her skill spreads to the devil himself. When the devil shows up at Rosie's gate in a city-slicker suit with a shiny fiddle on his shoulder, Rosie knows who he is—and she knows what she's doing when she accepts his best two out of three challenge to a fiddling contest. Rosie wins the first round; the devil wins the second. It looks like he'll win the third, too, when he fiddles till the townsfolk drop from dancing against their will, but Rosie fiddles till the devil drops, and "All that was left was a whiff of smoke and a shiny bright fiddle lying on the ground. The townsfolk cheered. The chickens clucked. And Rosie O'Grady smiled." Root's adaptation of this traditional motif has a fine read-aloud rhythm and a thoroughly satisfying progression as the devil gets his musical due. O'Malley's full and double-page illustrations reflect the lively text,

and they really come into their own during the fiddle contest as dark clouds of crows descend on the cornfield and the devil's confidently evil grin turns to cross-eyed disbelief as a result of Rosie's fiddling. This deserves a long shelf life, and is sure to get it—if you can keep it on the shelf at all. JMD

ROTNER, SHELLEY *Close, Closer, Closest*; written and illus. with photographs by Shelley Rotner and Richard Olivo. Atheneum, 1997 [34p]

ISBN 0-689-80762-7 \$13.00

Reviewed from galleys

Ad 5-7 yrs

From a regular distance, plump fresh strawberries look much as one would expect; in a closer look, one admires the luster around the slight dimpling that underlies the flecks on the surface; from an extreme closeup one notices the fibers within the rosy flesh and the solid symmetry of every seed. Rotner and Olivo provide over a dozen such perspectival enhancements, leading viewers to the heart of a sunflower, the scales on a butterfly wing, and the scratches on the face of a dime. Some of the spreads are more effective than others, and sometimes it's difficult to tell which part of the previous picture we're looking at more closely. The pictures might also have been better served with mere captions, as the minimal text tends to state the obvious with no particular verve. The book will, however, make for a nice handheld experience for kids easily stumped by the closeup guessing games in books such as Jerome Wexler's *Everyday Mysteries* (BCCB 9/95); they can enjoy the wonder of seeing things in a new way without feeling stupid for not knowing what they're looking at. A note on the methodology of the photographs is included. DS

RUBIN, SUSAN GOLDMAN *Emily in Love*. Browndeer/Harcourt, 1997 [176p]
ISBN 0-15-200961-2 \$14.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 6-9

Emily (of *Emily Good as Gold*, BCCB 11/93) is now fourteen, and she's attending the "normal" high school, instead of the school for kids with disabilities, for the first time. She's determined to be a regular teenager despite her mental handicap, which means hanging around with her fast friend Molly and trying to find a boyfriend—one *not* from the special class. As she did in the previous book, the author depicts Emily's strivings with tenderness and understanding; Rubin's particular gift is to make clear how Emily's struggles are both like and unlike those of other teenagers seeking more independence. Other characters, even those with smaller parts, are also strong, especially Emily's loving but worried parents, her affectionate sister-in-law who's struggling with her own problems, and the kind but not saintly object of Emily's ambitious affections. Best of all is Emily's increasing satisfaction with her work at the Farm Store, as she begins to revel in being the useful and reliable one for once, instead of the problem. Even readers unfamiliar with the first book will appreciate the story of Emily's travels on the road to maturation. DS

RUSSELL, CHING YEUNG *Lichee Tree*; illus. by Christopher Zhong-Yuan Zhang. Boyds Mills, 1997 182p

ISBN 1-56397-629-3 \$14.95

Ad Gr. 4-6

Ten-year-old Ying's lichee tree has finally begun to bear fruit. Anticipating the riches to be had from their sale, Ying counts her lichees before they ripen, so to speak, and plans to travel to the city of Canton to buy glass beads and see *kwailos* (foreigners). However, when the village thug, Ghost Walk, terrorizes Ying's fam-

ily and robs them of their wealth, Ying realizes that her potential earnings should help ensure the safety and survival of her family first; her dream will have to wait. As in *First Apple* (BCCB 1/95) and *Water Ghost*, Russell bases Ying's story on her own childhood in China in the 1940s. Rich cultural specifics (pre-meal rituals, spit-and-promise oaths, mudsnail feasts) inform universal childhood experiences, only occasionally lapsing into stereotypical descriptions and characterizations. Child-as-narrator often obscures the larger Chinese social and political context, though; readers may share Ying's increasing confusion and frustration as the adult characters refuse to explain chaotic events. Despite the story's moralistic bent, Ying's determination is irrepressible. Lemonade-stand proprietors and newspaper carriers working to make a dollar will surely empathize with her lichee-tree dreams. AEB

RYDER, JOANNE *Shark in the Sea*; illus. by Michael Rothman. Morrow, 1997 [32p] (Just for a Day Books)

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-14910-3 \$15.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-14909-X \$16.00

Reviewed from galleys

R 5-8 yrs

"You are a hunter,/ feared and mighty—/ your weapon/ a gaping mouth/ lined with triangles/ ragged and sharp." A young boy diving off the California coast transforms himself through imagination into a great white shark stalking its prey, and the particulars of the hunt, which culminates in a seal kill and ensuing feeding frenzy, should sate most shark lovers' bloodlust. A good deal of information about shark physiology and hunting method is conveyed in the intense, pulsing free verse, but nothing is mentioned about other shark behaviors. Rothman's double-page acrylic paintings, which detail the marine milieu and follow the chase from a variety of angles, will rivet browsers. Introductory notes expand somewhat on the textual data and comment on shark attacks upon humans. EB

SAN SOUCI, ROBERT, ad. *The Hired Hand: An African-American Folktale*; illus. by Jerry Pinkney. Dial, 1997 [40p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-1297-9 \$15.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-1296-0 \$15.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 6-8

Old Sam, owner of the town sawmill, takes on a hired hand to help out since his son, Young Sam, isn't worth a lick. Young Sam is a sorry lot, and he shows the New Hand no respect. When the New Hand restores an old farmer to the prime of youth, Young Sam secretly observes the process, and when the now-young farmer brings his old wife in for the same treatment, Young Sam swears he can do it—for a price. His ministrations leave the old woman dead, and Young Sam is arrested and convicted for murder. Convinced of Young Sam's regret for what he did, the New Hand restores the farmer's wife, and Young Sam is exonerated. "After this, Young Sam became the son Old Sam had prayed he'd be. . . . They took on several hired hands, and Young Sam always treated them fairly and kindly. But the New Hand was never seen in those parts again." San Souci's able retelling of this African-American tale is enriched by Jerry Pinkney's fine watercolors. The expressive faces and vivid body language of the characters enliven the eighteenth-century American landscape, as the sawmill turns, Young Sam lounges, and the New Hand works his magic. Extensive author's and artist's notes sets the story in its historical and visual framework. JMD

SELBY, JENNIFER *The Seed Bunny*; written and illus. by Jennifer Selby. Harcourt, 1997 26p
ISBN 0-15-201397-0 \$14.00 Ad 3-5 yrs

The seed bunny is a rabbit version of the tooth fairy. In this slight picture book, Sam is a little bunny with a loose front tooth. His mother tells him that when it falls out he can leave it under his pillow for the seed bunny, who will give him a packet of carrot seeds in exchange. Sam feels important (he is getting to be a bigger bunny in need of bigger teeth) and excited (he wants to see the seed bunny). Humorous but sometimes cluttered illustrations in bright contrasting colors show Sam trying to hurry up the process: he rides his bike over bumps, skips rope all the way to one hundred, hangs upside down, and sings tooth-loosening songs. But the stubborn tooth stays put, until he lies in bed and gives it one last wiggle. The tooth pops out, but Sam is too exhausted to wait up for the seed bunny. "Next time I'll stay awake," Sam promises himself as he takes his seeds outside to plant in the garden. Although neither very original nor very pithy, this comforting book will appeal to preschoolers who can't wait to lose their baby teeth. PMc

SHOUP, BARBARA *Stranded in Harmony*. Hyperion, 1997 [196p]
Library ed. ISBN 0-7868-2284-8 \$17.89
Trade ed. ISBN 0-7868-0287-1 \$17.95
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 7-12

Lucas Cantrell is the football captain, he's dating a cheerleader, his sister's best friend (tidily enough, his cheerleader sister is dating *Lucas'* best friend), and he knows everything that goes on in small Harmony, Indiana. And he can't stand any of it anymore, but he's not sure how to get out of it. Only at the quiet cabin of his bedridden uncle, Ronnie Dale, does Lucas find some solace, and it's there he gets to know neighbor Allie Bowen, who directly experienced the 1960s social movements that Lucas finds so meaningful and who provides him with a sense of a wider life beyond his immediate turmoil. Shoup, who effectively portrayed a young man struggling with the last vestiges of childhood in *Wish You Were Here* (BCCB 11/94), does so again here. She's particularly deft at depicting Lucas' desperation ("When I catch a pass and start running, all I can think is, If the goal post is as far as I can go with this sucker, what's the point?") and at maintaining readers' sympathy for Lucas as that desperation leads him to treat people he really cares for quite badly indeed. Most of all, readers will appreciate the book's heartening awareness of two important facts: crossing over the threshold *is* hard, and there is something better beyond it. DS

SOTO, GARY *Snapshots from the Wedding*; illus. by Stephanie Garcia. Putnam, 1997 [32p]
ISBN 0-399-22808-X \$15.95
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 5-9 yrs

An engaging subject, a conversational text, and uncannily interesting visuals make this an intriguing picture-book reminiscence. Maya is the flower girl at Isabel's wedding ("the beautiful bride, Isabel,/ Her hands soft as doves") and it is Maya's voice that vividly describes the celebratory events and participants therein. From "silly cousin Isaac . . . wiggling his tongue/ In the space between his baby teeth,/ White as Chiclets" to the wedding cake "with more frosting than a mountain of snow,/ With more roses than *mi abuela's* backyard,/ With more swirls than a hun-

dred turns on a merry-go-round" to falling asleep in the car on the way home, every child-pertinent detail is related with loving enthusiasm. Garcia's three-dimensional found-object and clay-sculpture sets, framed like Mexican altar scenes in opensided wooden boxes set against bridal lace, are a delightful confection of expressive faces and cunning details, as each wedding event is theatrically presented to the viewer. This is an unusually engaging book that will have broad appeal, as it can act as a spark to other wedding and family stories as well as to some unique art projects. Hand this to the kid who thinks dioramas are boring, and get ready to put up a display. JMD

STERN, MAGGIE *The Missing Sunflowers*; illus. by Donna Ruff. Greenwillow, 1997 32p

ISBN 0-688-14873-5 \$15.00

Ad 5-8 yrs

Simon wants a garden, and Mrs. Hope Potter, a kindly older neighbor, obliges with a gift of three sunflower plants to the young boy, whereupon a mystery commences. For Simon, the enigma is the disappearance of his flowers. For observant young horticulturalists, the perplexity is how seeds could be seen forming on a sunflower plant which only a few weeks ago was pot-bound, and where to put that dash of red pepper to ward hungry squirrels away from the plants—and would any boy really lose hold of his ice-cream cone because of a missing sunflower? Vivid acrylics capture the lioness poses of the blossoms and the dappled sky and vibrant greens of mid-to-late summer, although the humans never seem as vigorous as the summer glories around them. Simon's sleuthing ends as he discovers the "murders" are the work of errant squirrels ("I hate that squirrel," Simon cried. "How dare it kill my sunflower!"). Readers may enjoy playing the detective where even the mailman is a suspect, although Mrs. Potter's well-intentioned musings ("Sometimes the most precious things are the ones we can't keep," or "Dearie, it's the way of nature") get a little tiring. As a jumpstart to summertime fun (garden-ing and/or birdwatching) this might work or, better yet, try Ehler's *Planting a Rainbow*. PM

THOMAS, ROB *Slave Day*. Simon, 1997 [192p]

ISBN 0-689-80206-4 \$16.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 7-12

Slave Day is one of the proud traditions of Texas' Robert E. Lee High School; every year student-council members and various faculty go on the block for charity, serving their masters for a day. Thomas shifts back and forth among eight points of view, four slaves and four masters: there's an African-American activist who buys the black student-council president to bring home to the latter the offensiveness of the tradition; a cheerleader discovers that a day of slavery to her jock boyfriend isn't much different from any other day; an unpopular teacher and his master, a mediocre student, surprise one another; and the mayor's daughter finds her computer-geek slave useful—and perhaps more intriguing than she had thought. This is rather more like eight interwoven short stories than a novel, but the interweaving works fairly well; the individual voices are capably distinguished. The sagas vary in originality and effectiveness, but they're better paced than the author's *Rats Saw God* (BCCB 5/96) and interestingly told, examining both the individual characters and the complexities of the institution of *Slave Day* itself. Readers who enjoyed Todd Strasser's *How I Changed My Life* (BCCB 6/95) will appreciate this multivoiced exploration of a pivotal high-school day. DS

THOMSON, PEGGY *The Nine-Ton Cat: Behind the Scenes at an Art Museum*; by Peggy Thomson with Barbara Moore. Houghton, 1997 [96p] illus. with photographs

Trade ed. ISBN 0-395-82655-1 \$21.95

Paper ed. ISBN 0-395-82683-7 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-9

The full-time "lamper" checks on 8,000 lightbulbs, an art handler dusts a Degas wax figure with a delicate sable brush, a textile conservator examines white lab tables for telltale signs of insect droppings, and an installer rides a hydraulic lift to affix a Titian to the ceiling. Thomson tails these and a host of other workers at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC through their rounds, explaining the relationship between their tasks and the research, preservation, and education missions of the museum. Pausing along the route to examine how the simple act of cleaning or positioning an artwork can enhance a viewer's understanding of the piece, the author offers, in effect, short and painless lessons in art appreciation. Those who don't go for the art might still be enticed by the engineering—vacuums under the stair grating that clean visitors' shoes, a hydraulic crane that takes four days to lower a fifteen-ton bronze into position, a removable glass wall that provides ingress for pieces too large to fit through the door. By following the picture credits (which are, with a few maddening exceptions, coordinated with page numbers in the text), readers can take a self-conducted tour of some of the collection's highlights, which are reproduced here in crisp, if often small, photos. Teachers may want to use this to generate some pre-field-trip excitement among reluctant museumgoers. EB

VANASSE, DEB *A Distant Enemy*. Lodestar, 1997 179p

ISBN 0-525-67549-3 \$16.99

Ad Gr. 6-9

In a remote Yupik village in southwestern Alaska, fourteen-year-old Joseph tries to deal with his anger against the encroaching white man, his white father's desertion of the family some years ago, and his hostility toward a new white teacher. Joseph slashes the tires on a Fish and Game Commission airplane, is falsely accused of theft by an old clan enemy, and nearly dies of exposure on a frozen lake, but he is saved from freezing to death by a white man, the same teacher who arranged for him to pay damages to the commission instead of being arrested. There should be enough action here to make an involving story, but the plot points begin to pile up in remarkably predictable ways, with Joseph achieving enough self-awareness after his brush with death to enable him to write to his estranged father and accept an invitation to visit. Still, there is a strong sense of place, and some readers may enjoy following Joseph on his solitary hunting trips through the glorious and terrible winter landscape. JMD

VAN DRAANEN, WENDELIN *How I Survived Being a Girl*. HarperCollins, 1997 [176p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-026672-4 \$14.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026671-6 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 4-6

Twelve-year-old Carolyn hates the way being a girl limits her options—for friends, for fashion, for physical activity. She spends most of her time trying to get her brothers or her brothers' friends to play with her, ignoring the snout-nosed, doll-

obsessed Prunella and hating her “squiggling and giggling” classmate Helen. The story seems to be set in the past, since in this middle-class, generic suburban neighborhood, kids still play with record players, mothers stay at home, and there is apparently no such thing as a girl’s soccer team. There are some funny moments, as when Carolyn takes up arms (well, a petition anyway) against a mean music teacher. But the occasional laugh is not enough to unite this random series of everyday events which culminate in the birth of Carolyn’s baby sister and in Carolyn’s first crush, both of which make her feel better about being a girl. Characterization is shallow and somewhat flat, and we never get an engaging picture of Carolyn or any other character. It’s hard to shake the feeling of being stuck in a time warp when faced with such lines as “it’s so stupid being a girl” and “I did what any sensible girl would do. I cried.” JMD

VOAKE, CHARLOTTE *Ginger*; written and illus. by Charlotte Voake. Candlewick, 1997 [40p]

ISBN 0-7636-0108-X \$16.99

Reviewed from galleys

R* 3-6 yrs

Ginger is a big ginger (surprise!) cat, the contented pet of a little girl who “made him delicious meals and gave him a beautiful basket, where he would curl up . . . and close his eyes.” Enter the new kitten. “He’ll be a nice new friend for you, Ginger,” said the little girl. But Ginger didn’t want a new friend, especially one like this.” The naughty little kitten is too much for the previously settled feline, so Ginger “went out through the cat flap and didn’t come back.” After Ginger is rescued from the wet garden by the little girl (and the naughty kitten), détente is reached with the introduction of neutral territory—a cardboard box. Text and illustrations work together to give the cat’s-eye view of the proceedings, with large, clear watercolor and ink illustrations in muted shades of blue and ginger (naturally). Voake’s oversized pictures (usually one character per page or double-page spread) make this very storytime-friendly, and her tale has a little bit of everything that makes literature satisfying: love, jealousy, anger, and, finally, a happy ending. JMD

WASSILJEWA, TATJANA *Hostage to War: A True Story*; tr. by Anna Trenter. Scholastic, 1997 [192p]

ISBN 0-590-13446-9 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 6-9

Tatjana is thirteen when she writes her first journal entry in April 1941. Her second entry two months later reports the Germans’ declaration of war on Russia, and her third, their invasion. The rest of the book describes her father’s death, the family’s bouts of starvation, her own forced deportation to work in German fields and factories, her narrow escape from Allied bombing raids, and her liberation, including trains to Belgium and finally back to Russia, where she’s initially denied citizenship and education because she has no passport. This scope of events is far too large for detailed development except of events chronicled months and even years apart. Indeed, it comes as something of a shock to be reminded in the January 1947 entry that “when the troubles started, I wrote most of my diary in my imagination” (from May 1942). In spite of some mercurial time slips, however, the scenes themselves are vividly rendered against an inherently dramatic backdrop. In contrast to victims of the Holocaust, the suffering of Russians during

World War II is scarcely documented in children's literature, and this individualistic memoir takes a long step toward closing the gap. BH

WELLER, FRANCES WARD *Madaket Millie*; illus. by Marcia Sewall. Philomel, 1997 [32p]

ISBN 0-399-22785-7 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 6-9 yrs

"Where life had set her, she would make a difference." Millie Jewett, who would become something of a legend around her Madaket, Massachusetts home, realized that the Coast Guard's shuttering the station at Madaket meant that foundering boats were left without aid. And so Millie simply took over as self-trained and self-appointed guardian of the coastal waters, and "listened for the pulse of passing boats, the phone and crackling CB radio. Those were her lookouts, often swifter than the Coast Guard's fancy gear." Organizing rescue parties, evacuating vacationers, battling sharks—all in a day's work for the intrepid Millie. Sewall's paintings, boldly outlined and filled with the gray-blues and greens of the North Atlantic, are as hardy and rugged as her subject, and Millie herself is unglamorously depicted as a lumpy, powerful woman, placidly hefting "three hundred pounds of log upon her shoulders, bound for home," or fiercely "flexing burly arms" as she pitchforks a shark aground. It's refreshing to find a true story of a woman with brawn as well as brains, and who tests her considerable physical prowess against the elements rather than in the sports arena. An author's note gives some factual information about Millie but unfortunately leaves unclear how much of the story is legend. Still, what a great pick for Women's History Month. EB

WELLS, ROSEMARY *McDuff Moves In*; illus. by Susan Jeffers. Hyperion, 1997 [24p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-7868-2257-0 \$12.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-7868-0318-5 \$12.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 5-8 yrs

When the little white terrier flees the dogcatcher's truck, his situation doesn't initially look that hopeful, since nobody in the neighborhood seems inclined to be hospitable. The stray finally happens on the home of Lucy and Fred, a congenial couple who realize, while attempting to return the pup, that they want to keep him—and they do, naming him "McDuff" after their favorite brand of shortbread. The story isn't surprising and tips into the saccharine at the end ("How happy we are!" say Lucy, Fred, and McDuff "in their dreams"), but it's awfully hard to resist the capably told plight of a fuzzy lost dog. Jeffers tries a completely new style in her artwork here, employing panels of saturated colors in framed scenes of a 1930s couple who resemble a small-town Nick and Nora Charles, and whose lovely Art Deco life finally becomes complete with the addition of the attractively button-nosed West Highland White Terrier. McDuff is frankly irresistible and kids will probably wonder why it took him so long to find a home, but they'll applaud when he does. DS

WILLIS, PATRICIA *Danger Along the Ohio*. Clarion, 1997 [192p]

ISBN 0-395-77044-0 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 4-6

Separated from their father during a Shawnee attack along the Ohio River near

Wheeling, Amos, Clara, and Jonathan Dunn drift downstream in their flatboat until a fire forces them ashore. The siblings are determined to reach Marietta, where they expect to meet their father, or at worst, to learn definitely if he died in the attack. Their survival story—subsisting on nuts and berries, surviving fever, saving an Indian boy whom they dub Red Moccasin (Clara knows herbal medicine), who later intercedes for them with his tribe—will be familiar to readers of this genre. Willis provides a couple of novel twists in the form of Amos' guilt over the accidental shooting death of his friend Simon, and the children's reliance on their faithful family cow. The text is unfortunately laden with overexplanations, and the prose is formulaic: "They were supposed to be enemies, but Amos didn't think of him as an enemy. Except for the nut-brown skin, it could be any boy lying there. It could be Simon." However, readers just being introduced to perils-on-the-ol'-frontier novels could find this trek pretty entertaining. EB

YOUNG, ED *Voices of the Heart*; written and illus. by Ed Young. Scholastic, 1997 32p

ISBN 0-590-50199-2 \$17.95

SpR Gr. 6-9

Ed Young pushes the envelope of picture-book illustration once again with this unusual combination of image and language. Twenty-six Chinese characters describing a feeling or emotion (virtue, shame, forgiveness, sorrow, grace, mercy, etc.) are physically embodied through Young's art. In the sidebars, each feeling or emotion is written in English in red text, with an accompanying definition in black. The Chinese character is at the bottom of the page, also in red. Black text in between gives a definition of the emotion or feeling and breaks down each "piece" of the Chinese character, giving its meaning as well. The mixed-media collages of handmade and dyed papers for each emotion are a juxtaposition of color and character elements that results in compositions of unusual impact. Each emotion or feeling is defined by its impact on the human heart, and each illustration contains the image of a heart either acting or being acted upon by the character elements. Evil (defined as "The heart cannot express its goodness") is visually depicted as a dark heart on a red-brick-colored background topped by the symbols of a blocked road, also in black. Constancy ("The heart is faithful") is shown as a heart on bright orange, with the symbols for the sun balanced between earth and sky. This is a powerful combination of words and imagery that lends itself to a number of uses both in the library and the classroom, but it will need the intercession of a knowledgeable adult to make this a part of a language, art, or religion curriculum. An extensive note explains Young's inspiration for the book and his execution of the artwork. JMD

ZAMORANO, ANA *Let's Eat!*; illus. by Julie Vivas. Scholastic, 1997 [32p]

ISBN 0-590-13444-2 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad 4-7 yrs

Antonio's very pregnant Mamá cooks for the whole family every day of the week, and every day, someone in the family misses the meal. Father can't come to the table for chickpea soup because there is too much work in the carpentry shop; sister Alicia can't come for *empanadas* because she is practicing dancing the *sevillanas* for the summer fiesta; Grandmother can't come because she is picking tomatoes in the garden, etc. "*Ay, qué pena!* What a pity," sighs Mamá." When Mamá goes into the hospital to have the baby and everyone else is at the table, narrator Anto-

nio misses his mother. “*Ay, qué pena!*” I sigh, just like Mamá!” The final double-page spread shows the whole family—parents, grandparents, three children, and new baby—gathered around the big table for a welcome home feast of paella. “*Qué maravilla!*” sighs Mamá. ‘How wonderful that everyone is eating together!’” The cumulative nature of the text provides a nice rhythm, and this lovely sentiment is sure to appeal to adults with fond memories of crowded family tables, but the repetition quickly begins to seem redundant and the gentle storyline may be too subtle and uninvolving for young listeners. Julie Vivas’ watercolor illustrations are remarkably appealing: Mamá is a great, round, expectant shape; the Spanish village setting is gently evoked with tiled rooftops and castle ruins; the unusual perspectives and expressive faces result in consistently involving compositions. A short glossary of Spanish words and phrases is included. JMD

ZIEFERT, HARRIET *Baby Buggy*Buggy Baby*; illus. by Richard Brown. Lorraine/Houghton, 1997 16p (A Word Play Flap Book)
ISBN 0-395-85161-0 \$10.95 16p Ad 5-8 yrs

ZIEFERT, HARRIET *Night*Knight*; illus. by Richard Brown. Lorraine/Houghton, 1997 16p (A Word Play Flap Book)
ISBN 0-395-85160-2 \$10.95 Ad 5-8 yrs

These two concept books have bright, appealing illustrations, sturdy architecture, and a number of possible uses. Though neither is entirely successful, the attempt is valiant and valuable. *Baby Buggy*Buggy Baby* is a collection of two-word phrases, each paired with its converse: in the title phrase (“baby buggy”) the top picture shows a smiling baby in a baby buggy; lift the flap and you reveal a baby on a blanket surrounded by ladybug, caterpillar, and butterflies, with the caption “buggy baby.” Additional phrases are much the same: an engagement “ring in a box” is accompanied by two fighters who “box in a ring”; “plant by a house” shows a shrub growing next to a house, while “house by a plant” shows a house located next to a fume-spewing factory. *Night*Knight*, a book of homonyms, is a little obscure as well: a rowboat “oar” is accompanied by “ore,” illustrated with a miner pushing an ore-filled scuttle out of a mine; the vegetable “beet” is paired with what looks like a kachina pounding on a very unobtrusive drum to illustrate “beat.” Brown’s illustrative style will be familiar from *What Rhymes with Snake?* (BCCB 3/94); the images here are not always so clear, but they retain his intriguing technique of visually linking the pictures on and under the flap with a shared component. The books are designed for younger children, but many of these concepts will require some explanation by the participating adult. Still, this has the built-in appeal of lift-the-flap play books, and patient adults will welcome the addition to a sparse field of attractive reading-readiness materials. JMD



CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARDS 1997

The Newbery Medal will be awarded to E. L. Konigsburg for *The View From Saturday* (Karl/Atheneum). The Newbery Honor Books are *A Girl Named Disaster* by Nancy Farmer (Jackson/Orchard), *The Moorchild* by Eloise McGraw (McElderry), *The Thief* by Megan Whalen Turner (Greenwillow), and *Belle Prater's Boy* by Ruth White (Farrar).

The Caldecott Medal will be awarded to David Wisniewski for *Golem* (Clarion). The Caldecott Honor Books are *Hush!: A Thai Lullaby*, written by Minfong Ho and illustrated by Holly Meade (Kroupa/Orchard), *The Graphic Alphabet*, illustrated by David Pelletier (Orchard), *The Paperboy*, written and illustrated by Dav Pilkey (Jackson/Orchard), and *Starry Messenger*, written and illustrated by Peter Sís (Foster/Farrar).

The Coretta Scott King Award will be presented to Walter Dean Myers, author of *Slam!* (Scholastic Press), for writing and to Jerry Pinkney for *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman*, written by Alan Schroeder (Dial), for illustration. The King Honor Book for writing is Patricia C. and Fredrick L. McKissack's *Rebels Against Slavery: American Slave Revolts* (Scholastic Press). King Honor Books for illustration are *The Palm of My Heart: Poetry by African American Children*, edited by Davida Adedjouma and illustrated by Gregory Christie (Lee & Low), *Running the Road to ABC*, written by Denizé Lauture and illustrated by Reynold Ruffins (Simon & Schuster), and *Neeny Coming, Neeny Going*, written by Karen English and illustrated by Synthia Saint James (BridgeWater Books).

The American publisher receiving the Mildred L. Batchelder Award for the most outstanding translation of a book originally published in a foreign language is Farrar Straus Giroux for Kazumi Yumoto's *The Friends*.

The 1998 May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture will be delivered by Susan Hirschman.

Gary Paulsen is the 1997 winner of the Margaret A. Edwards Award for Outstanding Literature For Young Adults honoring an author's lifetime contribution in writing books for teenagers.

The ALSC Distinguished Service Award goes to Zena Sutherland.

The Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction goes to Katherine Paterson's *Jip: His Story* (Lodestar).

The Canadian Library Association's Best Book of the Year for children is *The Tiny Kite of Eddie Wing* by Maxine Trottier (Kane/Miller). The Best Book of the Year for Young Adults is *The Maestro* by Tim Wynne-Jones (Kroupa/Orchard). The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award goes to Karen Reczuch for *Just Like New*, written by Ainslie Manson (Groundwood).

The Carnegie Medal was awarded to Philip Pullman for *Northern Lights (His dark materials: book 1)*, published in the U.S. as *The Golden Compass* (Knopf).

The Kate Greenaway Medal was awarded to P. J. Lynch for *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey*, written by Susan Wojciechowski (Candlewick).

The Hans Christian Andersen Medal for writing goes to Uri Orlev of Israel; the illustration medal goes to Klaus Ensikat of Germany.

NCTE's Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children goes to *Leonardo da Vinci* by Diane Stanley (Morrow); Honor Books are *Full Steam Ahead: The Race to Build a Transcontinental Railroad* by Rhoda Blumberg (National Geographic), *The Life and Death of Crazy Horse* by Russell Freedman (Holiday House), and *One World, Many Religions: The Ways We Worship* by Mary Pope Osborne (Knopf).



SUBJECT AND USE INDEX

Keyed to *The Bulletin's* alphabetical arrangement by author, this index, which appears in each issue, can be used in three ways. Entries in regular type refer to subjects; entries in **bold type** refer to curricular or other uses; entries in ALL-CAPS refer to genres and appeals. In the case of subject headings, the subhead "stories" refers to books for the readaloud audience; "fiction," to those books intended for independent reading.

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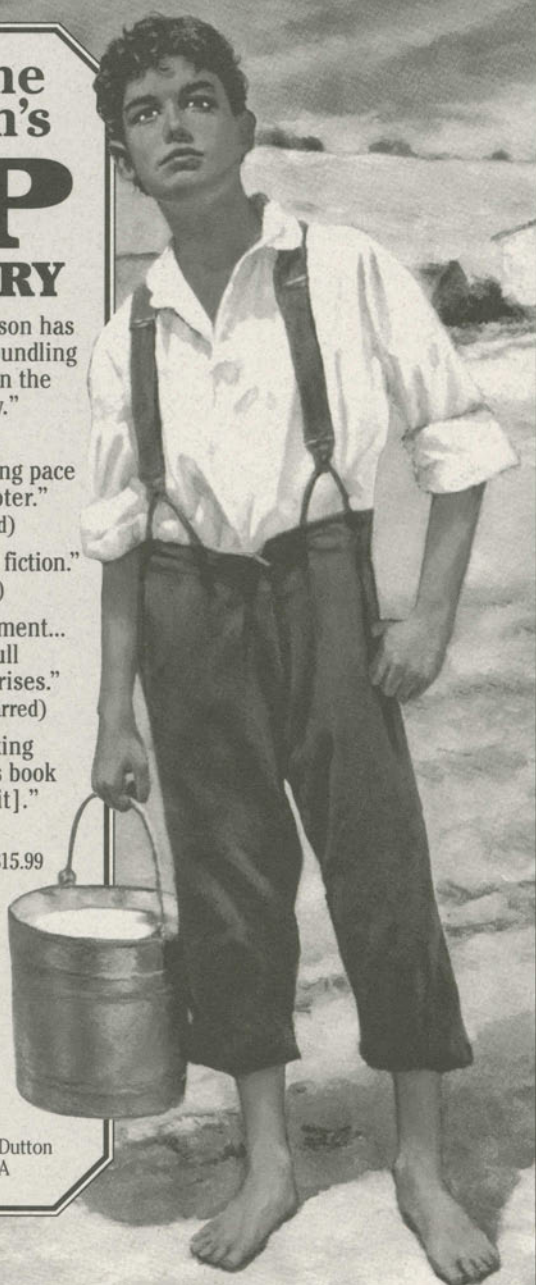
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